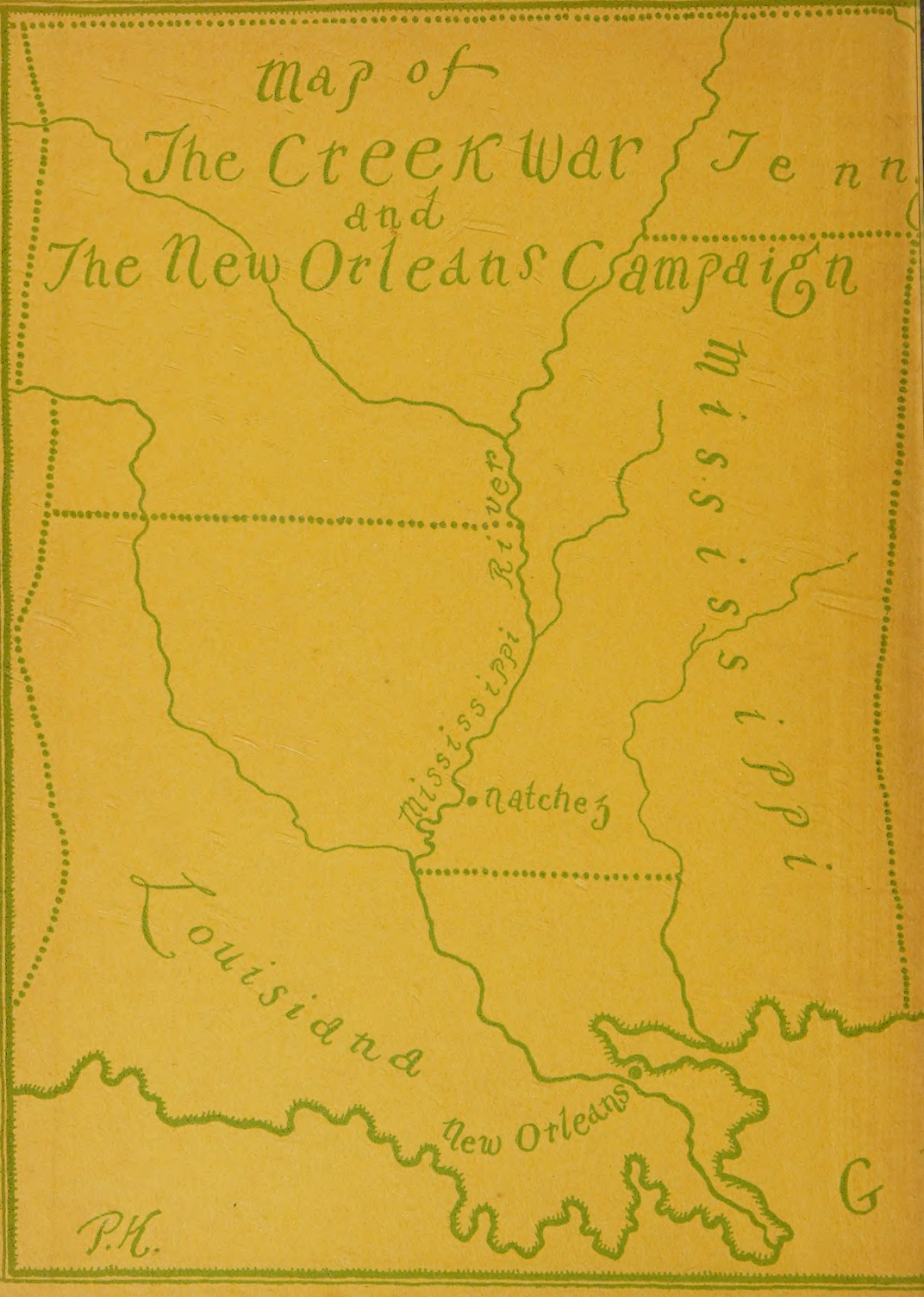
Andrew Jackson

An Epic in Homespun

by

Gerald W. Johnson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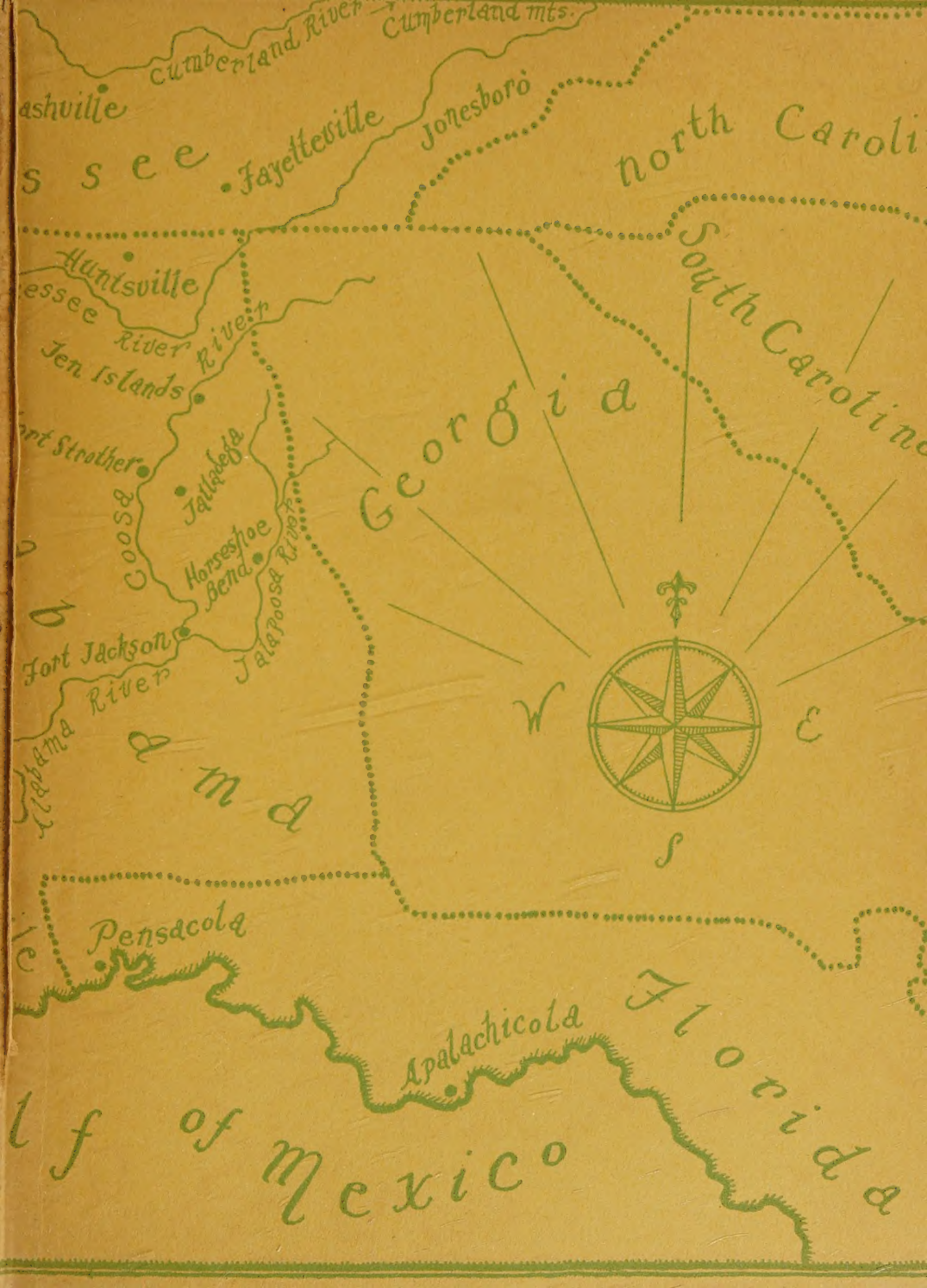
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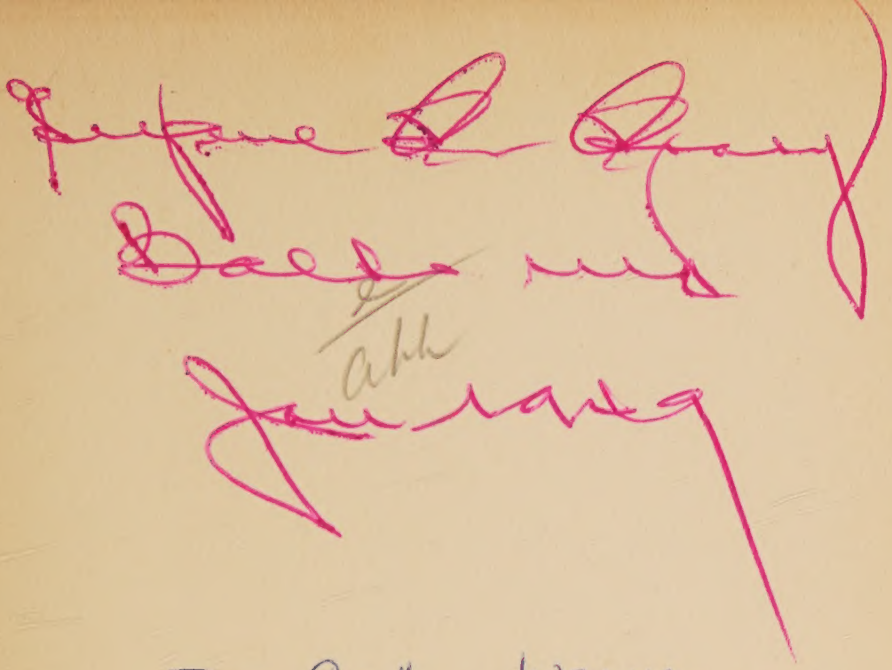

For Sally. Wayne

Jan. 1995

ANDREW JACKSON

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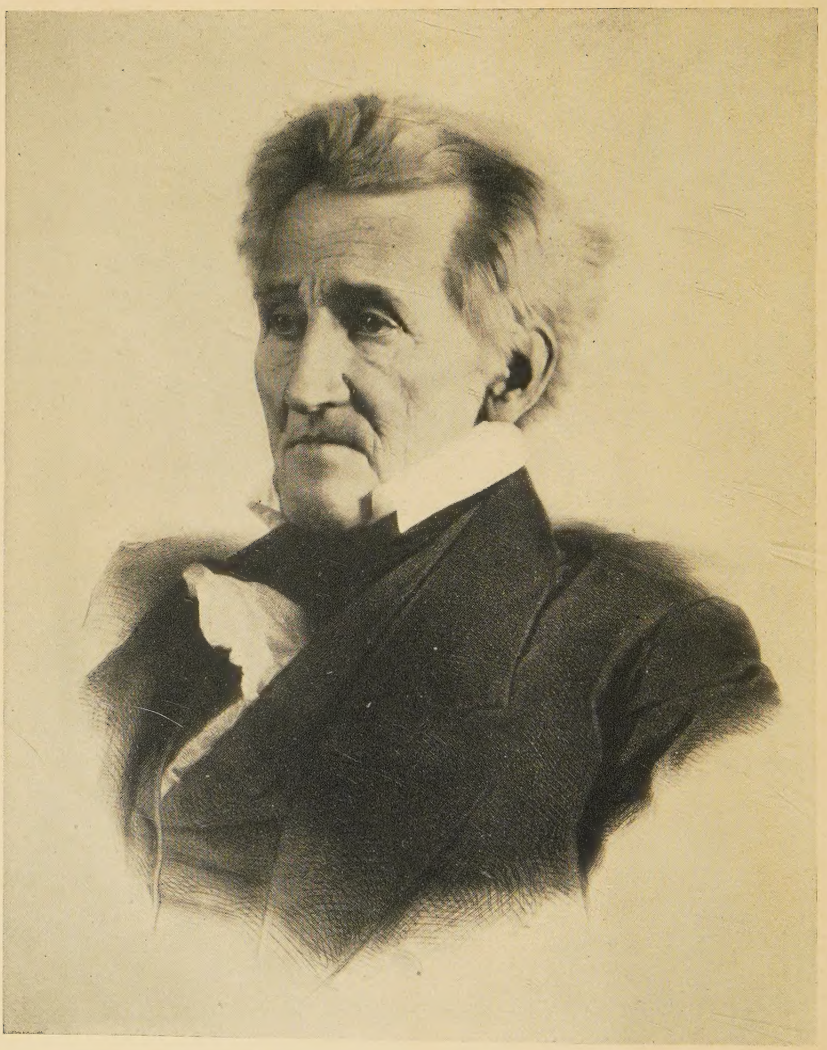

Jackson in His Old Age

ANDREW JACKSON

AN EPIC IN HOMESPUN

GERALD W. JOHNSON

"What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"

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TO

MY FATHER

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ANDREW JACKSON

Andrew Jackson

CHAPTER I

How Mr. Jackson, Contrary to All Known Rules, Persists in Living.

TRADITION relates of Rachel Jackson that she explained a family epidemic once by saying, "The General kicked the kivers off and we all cotch cold."

Historians and biographers have written many estimates of Andrew Jackson's career that might fairly be summed up in Rachel's words. The General kicked right lustily. He kicked off many of the warm wrappings that swathed the young republic from the bitter blasts of democracy. He kicked away the existing political system and substituted one more to his liking. He was the most uncomfortable of political bedfellows.

Nor is there any lack of mourners to trace to his intervention most of the political ills that afflict us now. The Spoils System, the party machine, the distrust of ability and the worship of mediocrity and the peculiarly ruffianly politics that lead philosophers to despair of

democracy are all laid to his charge. The fact that he neither invented nor first introduced into American political life any of these things is ignored, as Rachel ignored the predispositions that made her family susceptible to colds. It is all the General's fault. He kicked. We have suffered since. Let him bear the blame for our ills.

In so far as Jackson is concerned, it is difficult even for a sentimentalist to pump up any great moral indignation in his behalf. History perhaps never selected for an unjust burden shoulders better able to bear it. In life the General throve on criticism; and since his death the damnation pronounced upon his reputation by countless learned clerks has not been able to bear it down. James Parton, writing fifteen years after Jackson was buried, noted the legend that in the backwoods citizens still went to the polls at each succeeding election and voted happily for Andrew Jackson. Parton thought it remarkable. One wonders what he would have thought had he known that the legend would survive when he, himself, had been in the grave for forty years. But survive it does. Remote precincts today are described by political workers as places where they are still voting for Andrew Jackson.

The man is a popular hero in the strictest sense of the word. He is the hero of the people, not of the *intelligentsia.* The people still delight in the legends of his

prowess, of his lurid language, of his imperious and dictatorial temper. The tale of his usurpations does not appal them, but delights them, for Americans have always loved a really masterful man. If Jackson's spiritual heir should appear now, there is every reason to believe America of the twentieth century would hail him as rapturously and follow him as blindly as it hailed and followed the hero a hundred years ago.

Therefore he remains a significant figure. His faults stand out with startling vividness. His errors are plain to the purblind. His weaknesses are obvious, his follies patent, his egregiousness inescapable. But the man will not collapse. His fame is still dear to the hearts of the people, therefore the prudent man will search diligently for some residuum after the faults, errors and follies have been taken into account. For if another appears with such qualities, even handicaps as gigantic as those under which Jackson labored cannot prevent his sweep to power. And the wise men of that day will be those who recognize him early and align themselves with him, rather than against him. It is this that gives him a severely practical significance in the century that has succeeded his own.

But to the impractical idealist, to the dilletant, to the curious seeker after the bizarre, the quaint, the colorful, Jackson makes as powerful an appeal as to the student of public affairs. For he was above all else vivid.

He was a great actor, and on the national scene he staged the most gorgeous, colorful and romantic show in American history. He was fortunate in his supporting cast, it is true. Rarely indeed has Washington been presented with such a galaxy of talent as appeared in the administration and the opposition between 1828 and 1836. Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Taney, Livingston, Cass, Benton, Van Buren, John Quincy Adams—the length of the list of celebrated names of the period is amazing. But Jackson, alone, would have held the attention of the country. When he first came to Washington certain Senators were informed by alarmed friends that he had sworn to cut off their ears. He left the city pensively regretting his failure either to shoot Henry Clay or to hang John C. Calhoun. Yet during his tenure of power he committed neither homicide nor mayhem. Americans have never known how to resist a man who could talk like a pirate and act like a Presbyterian, and Jackson could do both to a perfection not approached by any of his successors until the days of Theodore Roosevelt.

And he had one great advantage over Roosevelt, namely, a record. Before he came to the Presidency, Jackson had both hanged and shot men, and all the while he was in the White House it was thrillingly uncertain when he might carry out some of his threats literally. He was a canny man, and it is possible that

there never was a moment when he actually would have hanged Calhoun; but there were several moments when the country believed that if the President could but lay hands on the Vice-President, the latter's days would be numbered. It is said to be an accepted dictum in the theatrical world that if you can work into your play of three hours' length just thirty seconds during which the spectator will sit on the edge of his seat while the hair rises on the back of his neck, your success is assured, no matter what fills up the rest of the time. Jackson gave the country many such moments. It is no wonder that his performance was an immense success, greeted with applause that has come rolling down the years to the ears of a generation living a century after the curtain first rose.

Yet the rejoicing galleries had more serious, if perhaps no better, reasons for their plaudits than simply the entertainment purveyed to them by Andrew Jackson. He did throw down the bars that hedged them from effective participation in the conduct of their own government. He did destroy a sinister alliance between politics and finance that was swiftly reducing them to economic serfdom. He did shatter the Nullification movement, thereby postponing for twenty years the day when half a million of them had to die for the preservation of the Union. All these works were impermanent, no doubt, but they were effective for the

time and the place. He richly earned the loyalty that common men gave him.

Yet Jackson lived for seventy-eight years and was President only eight. The Washington days were merely the resultant of the forces that had played upon him during the half century he existed before he reached the White House. To one who understood fully the fifty years in the wilderness, the eight in the capital would be as an open book.

Now the delight of studying Jackson lies in the fact that the first fifty years are less glamorous, perhaps, but not less gaudy, than the succeeding eight. He had actually become legendary before he became President, instead of afterward, as is the modern practice. This is attested by the fact that when Senators were told that General Jackson had arrived in town swearing to have their ears it apparently never occurred to them to discredit the report. In the popular estimation he was already a man set apart so far from ordinary mortals as to be quite unpredictable. Probability did not apply to Jackson. He conformed to no known rules. He was a monster or a demigod, but not by any chance a man.

And so, to a large extent, he has since remained. Yet to the student who makes even a superficial examination of the record of his life it is apparent that few men who have figured largely in public affairs have exhibited more conspicuously the traits common to all humanity,

both the worst and the best. Jackson was intensely human. It is merely the intensity of his humanity, indeed, that has given rise to the legends of a superman.

It was his fate to live on the frontier, where men were disciplined, indeed, but not with the discipline of settled communities. The discipline of the frontier hardens, but does not bleach. Life retains its color. Halftones, all delicacy of shading, are intensified into the primary hues, and characters become black and white, scarlet and yellow and blue. To the townsman, accustomed to pink and lavender and baby-blue souls, the strong colors of the frontier are barbarous and terrifying. But to the student who encounters them only in books they are gorgeous.

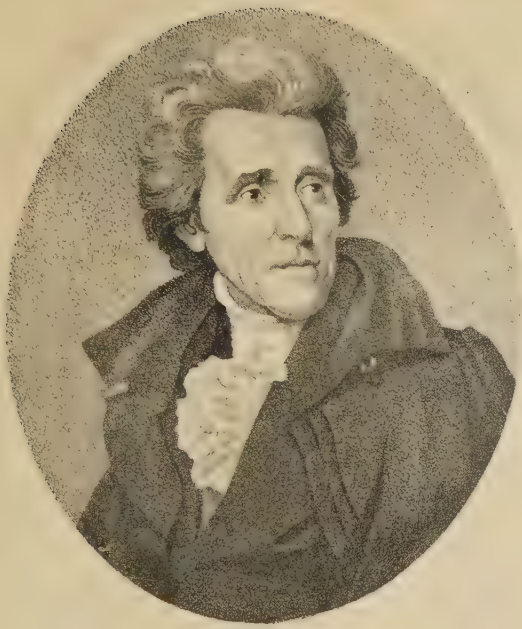
Jackson, as a small boy, comes reeling into American history with a sabre cut on his head and as the years gather upon him they gleam with steel and blood. It was a roaring career, resounding to the roars of cheering multitudes, of musketry, of artillery. It was a theatrical career in the style of Gallic romance, astonishingly like the career that Rostand imagined for Cyrano de Bergerac. Jackson relied on pistols, not a rapier, and he has never been accused of making a ballade or of being partial to Socrates and Galileo. But he was a great duellist, a great soldier and a great lover. He was fiery, quixotic, honest and loyal. He was curiously romantic and incessantly dramatized himself and

his surroundings, often to the exquisite embarrassment of more prosaic men.

And he carried a handicap that was the equivalent of Cyrano's nose. Like the Frenchman's unfortunate feature, it was a fact that could not be denied, and the circumstance that he knew no evil impulse on his part had caused it only exacerbated his rage when it was mentioned. But after one man had died violently at his hands for the reason, as all the world believed, that he had talked loosely, men became exceedingly cautious. None but would-be suicides said "nose" to Cyrano or "adultery" to Andrew Jackson.

There would be neither sense nor dignity in denying that much in his career the most sophistical of moralists have found it difficult to defend. Dead men tell tales on Andrew Jackson. There were at least eight whose deaths are attributable, by the kindliest interpretation, to qualities no more heroic than his impetuosity and ignorance. There were quarrels and brawls innumerable that did him no honor. There were moments when his mulish obstinacy did the state harm. These things are not only morally indefensible, but they are in themselves ugly and repellent.

But while a man may be judged on a single overt act, those who knew his whole story love him or hate him for the sum of all his deeds. Cyrano, too, came under the condemnation of the grave citizens of his time. But



Jackson's "Was a Theatrical Career"

in the eyes of the generations that have followed, both men are saved by much the same qualities—courage, sentiment, vigor and resolution. In both these characteristics were sometimes exaggerated into swashbuckling, sentimentality, presumption and obstinancy, but in the final accounting the exaggeration seems relatively unimportant.

So we see Andrew Jackson, in the perspective of a hundred years, cutting and slashing his way to power, a raucous fellow, an explosive, heavy-handed, dangerous and pestiferous fellow, but withal a man who had a code and lived up to it. He hated and loved and swore with a magnificence beyond all American experience. But he did not cringe, he did not fawn, he did not carry water on both shoulders. When he lost—and he lost heavily and frequently—he paid without whimpering. He loved a woman and lost her, and of all his innumerable wounds that hurt worst and longest.

Against admiration, respect and pity one must pile up mountains of crime if they are to inspire no affection. Affection for Andrew Jackson is impossible to avoid if one knows his story; for let his enemies say what they will, here was one American who carried himself with an air, unlettered, uncouth, unskilled in the graces of polite society, but none the less a *chevalier*. He is almost the only man who has figured in American public life of whom it is imaginable that he might have quit the

earthly stage with the theatrical grace of Cyrano's closing lines:

"When I enter God's house my salutation shall sweep the blue threshold with something free from creases, free from stains, which I shall carry in spite of all of you—my plume!"

* * *

All of which may seem something less than obvious, but hear the story and then judge.

CHAPTER II

How Master Jackson Came into American History Somewhat Dazed.

THE time was March, 1767. The woman in the case was the Widow Jackson, relict of the late Andrew Jackson, pioneer farmer. But the place has been for generations, and still is, the subject of endless and acrimonious dispute between two sovereign commonwealths.

Within a few hundred yards of the farmhouse where George McKemey lived ran the boundary line between His Majesty's Provinces of North and South Carolina. On March 15, 1767, Mrs. Jackson, widowed a few weeks earlier, bore a son in George McKemey's house. But was the boundary line, less than a quarter of a mile away, to the east of that house, or west of it? The boundary line between the two Carolinas at that point runs almost north and south. The boy who was born that night thought that the line was east of the McKemey farmstead, and the belief sixty years afterward sharpened with poignant eloquence his appeal to "fellow-citizens of my native State" when South Carolina threatened dissolution of the Union. But James Parton,

investigating in 1859, was convinced by such documentary evidence as existed, supplemented by the testimony of aged residents of the region, that the line lay west of George McKemey's house, and that the boy was born in North Carolina.

The point at the time seemed as insignificant as anything well could be, seeing who were the actors in this backwoods drama. For the Jacksons were worse than poor. They were luckless. Not much is known of their life in Carrickfergus, Ireland, where Andrew Jackson and Elizabeth Hutchinson, his wife, carried on the business of linen drapers; but obviously fortune never smiled upon them conspicuously, for in 1765 they joined the flood of immigrants to America, a step then as now rarely taken by anyone in good circumstances.

And they found no magic in the New World. Jackson obtained possession of certain lands, uncleared, on Twelve Mile Creek, in North Carolina. Presumably he was a tenant since Parton's careful search of the records revealed no title deed in his name. Twelve Mile Creek is a tributary of the Catawba River, and in 1765 it was on the extreme edge of the relatively well-settled region known as "the Waxhaws." Immigrants with money purchased cleared land within the settlements. Those with none had to go out into the edge of the forest.

The linen draper from Carrickfergus apparently

faced his lot with the grim fortitude of his race. Carrickfergus is only nine miles from Belfast and Jackson was an Ulsterman. It is an unlovely race, hard-headed, hard-featured, hard-fisted, but one well adapted for the conquest of a wilderness since it is singularly durable. The Scots who have held on to a scrap of north Ireland for three centuries necessarily developed tenacity. Jackson was one of them. It is a frightful task to clear for cultivation land covered with virgin forest. It is a task fit to appal a seasoned woodsman, accustomed to the use of ax and maul, toughened to long and arduous labor out of doors. What it must have been to the linen draper from Carrickfergus is beyond imagination. But he attacked the forest resolutely and not without success, for the record testifies that he cleared his land, raised at least one crop and built his log house by the beginning of the year 1767.

History is full of the battles of the Scotch-Irish, and they are usually well fought. The struggle of the immigrant Jackson against the harsh New World is not in the list, yet there is no reason to doubt that it was as gallant as any of them. But in the end it was a lost battle, for early in 1767, with his two sons still small and a third expected soon, he lay down and died.

The forest had conquered. In a rude farm-wagon they brought his body down to old Waxhaw church-yard and buried it there without a stone to mark the place.

The family came down at the same time, and never saw their hard-won home on Twelve Mile Creek again. Mrs. Jackson had relatives in South Carolina to whom she turned. A brother-in-law, who lived close to the church, realizing that she was in no fit condition for the ordeal of travel over the roads that then existed, all unwittingly saved his own name from oblivion by offering her shelter. For he was George McKemey, and in his house a few nights later was born the boy who was named Andrew, after the dead linen-draper.

So there was another Andrew Jackson to carry on the fight of the Scotch-Irish against the wilderness, and this one did not die when his work was but well begun. On the contrary, he broke the forces of the wilderness. He swept clear a broad path for settlers from the Tennessee to the Gulf of Mexico. He swept Florida. He burst the last barrier that threatened to bar the way of all Mississippi Valley folk to the highway of the sea. He became the scourge of the children of the wilderness, and the warden of white civilization in a territory immensely greater than all Ireland.

The linen draper was avenged.

But George McKemey never knew it. Kindly George never guessed that the time would come when two great commonwealths would dispute hotly for the honor of having the site of his humble home on the right side of the line, when historians and antiquarians would

consider no trouble too great to find out where he lived, when monuments would be erected in two places, each claiming to mark the spot where the house of George McKemey stood. George unquestionably knew where he lived, and so did everyone else in the neighborhood. But no one considered it of the slightest importance, so they forgot. And the years passed, finally taking George himself to old Waxhaw churchyard and giving his farm to a man of another name. It was as if he had never been.

Time had run far into the next century before he was remembered again. But when a man from the Waxhaws had become glorious in the eyes of the people, the reflection of his fame shone back upon his origin, and suddenly out of the otherwise fathomless obscurity of George McKemey's life one small point began to glitter. It was in his house that the great General Jackson's mother was sheltered and gave birth to her illustrious son.

So George McKemey fulfills the singular destiny of living in history, not as a man, for nothing is known of him as a man, but as the embodiment of a kindly deed.

This was the origin of Andrew Jackson: troubled, dark, difficult to determine exactly. It was the hard beginning of a hard career. The man rarely knew ease of body or of soul. In his mother's womb he seemed to be

foreordained to travel a stony road, to cut his way through wildernesses, to contend against darkness, to fight often alone and always against great odds. Yet his birth is touched with one omen of fair import: George McKemey's humanity was for the infant Andrew Jackson one reason to think well of the bitter world he had entered.

It is always a bitter world to the boy who enters it without family, or influential friends, or money; and this boy had the additional ill luck to enter it at a moment when it was growing bitter to the great, not to mention the penniless son of an immigrant. In 1767 war clouds were already high and in the Carolinas, as in the other colonies, thoughtful men were already regarding the future with foreboding. Already, too, the inevitable first symptom of war fever was revealing itself in party division between neighbors and quondam friends —a division that was to deepen and widen until after ten years' festering it was to break out in murder, rapine, pillaging, burning and all the other horrors of civil war.

It was in this atmosphere of increasing tension that little Andrew spent his childhood. Three weeks after his birth his mother resumed her interrupted journey into South Carolina and was received into the house of another brother-in-law, Crawford by name, whose wife was an invalid. Mrs. Jackson undertook the management of the household in return for a home for herself

and her children. Apparently she occupied the position of a dependent poor relation, a position well designed to tame the proudest spirit. But this was the frontier, where an able-bodied woman was valuable and knew it. As the services of a housekeeper were of no mean account to a settler in the Waxhaws, the widow was far from being an object of charity in the usual meaning of the term. Furthermore, Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson was Scotch-Irish. It is a breed not easily crushed, and it is probable that the indomitable strain that characterized her son was not inherited exclusively from his father. At any rate, she made shift somehow to put her sons in the best schools available, and it appears that for Andrew, in particular, her aspirations were practically limitless. She hoped to make him a Presbyterian minister!

This ambition in the closing years of the eighteenth century was less incongruous than it seems now. In the Waxhaws in 1767 a Presbyterian minister was a very considerable personage indeed. The country was occupied largely by the Scotch-Irish, and a little to the northeast lay the much larger area of the Cape Fear basin, occupied almost exclusively by Highland Scotch. So over perhaps ten thousand square miles in the neighborhood of the Waxhaws Presbyterianism was the dominant faith. The ministers were much more than ecclesiastics, more than simply spiritual guides. They were

the accepted leaders of their people in almost every phase of life. Education was practically exclusively in their hands. To a large extent they dictated social manners and customs. They were ordinarily better educated than the members of their congregations and not infrequently were men of real learning.

So when Elizabeth Jackson wished to make her son a Presbyterian minister, she wished to make him more than simply a preacher. She wished to make him the man whose word was more nearly law than that of any other human being in the vicinity, whose decisions were respected, if not always accepted, on any subject, whose good-will was desired and whose denunciations were dreaded by all elements. The Presbyterian minister at that time and in that place was not simply the Levite—he was one of the rulers of Israel.

There is something ludicrous in thinking of Andrew Jackson as a theologian, but to all the other functions of the ministry of that time he was temperamentally well adapted. Years later he encountered a man who embodied most of the qualities of the Presbyterian ministry of the Carolinas in 1767. This was the famous Peter Cartwright, not a Presbyterian, indeed, but a frontier priest of the old school. Cartwright was then engaged in establishing Methodism in the Mississippi Valley, partly by the power of an upright character, partly by the power of an intense and lurid eloquence, and partly by

the power of a hard fist and a mighty arm to drive it against the jaw of any contumacious unbeliever. He and Jackson understood and appreciated each other instantly and parted with mutual esteem, in spite of the fact that in the preacher's eyes the general was ungodly in the extreme. They had too much in common not to agree on most topics.

Yet the meagre evidence that is available all indicates that even in his childhood Andrew Jackson was plainly no candidate for holy orders. In 1859 Parton found the countryside still full of tales of a schoolboy who was a terror by reason of a tremendous fund of energy coupled with an equally tremendous temper. These tales refer somewhat vaguely to all sorts of devilment into which Andy led his companions, but they are clearest on the point of the fury with which the lad turned upon any incautious practical joker who undertook to render him ridiculous. There is, for example, the story of the group of boys who loaded a gun with an excessive charge and then handed it to Andy to fire, expecting to enjoy seeing him knocked flat. They saw him knocked flat, but the enjoyment was cut short when he leaped to his feet, his eyes blazing, and ripped out:

"By God, if one of you laughs, I'll kill him!"

Nobody laughed. Nobody ever laughed at Andrew Jackson in a fury.

This excessive, not to say morbid, fear of appearing

ridiculous is of itself illuminating to the modern psychologist. The case becomes plainer when it is further known that the boy was physically handicapped. He suffered during childhood from a nervous affection that manifested itself in the unpleasant phenomenon colloquially known as "slobbering." Add the fact that he was a penniless orphan, the son of an immigrant woman, landless in a country where land-owning was the first proof, not of nobility, but of bare respectability, and it is plain enough that young Andrew staggered under a tremendous sense of inferiority. His escapades, his furies, his frantic defiances were not, as his pessimistic elders inferred, proof that he had the devil in him, but simply the desperate efforts of a proud and sensitive spirit to prove to itself that it could command a place in a world where the odds were all against it.

Furthermore, the spirit of the time tended to accentuate, rather than soften, the sharpness of Andrew's mental and moral angles.

War burst upon the country when he was nine years old, and in the Carolinas it was a war of such ferocity as is unparalleled in American history, except, perhaps, in some Indian campaigns. For the first four years the fighting was more or less regularized, although passions ran higher and higher. The Highland Scotch in large numbers fought for the king, and Tories were everywhere. Then in 1780 Lincoln was caught in Charles-

ton, and all the regulars, the Continentals, of the two Carolinas were lost with him. Cornwallis swept northward and the Tories rose behind him. At Camden, Gates was smitten such a blow that the American army of the South virtually ceased to exist. Then Greene came down to take command and rounding up every available man of military age fell slowly back before Cornwallis, consolidating his forces as he went. Cornwallis, concentrating his columns and leaving Lord Rawdon with a small command in Camden, moved after Greene. Thus the country around the Waxhaws was swept bare of regular troops of both armies, whereupon bands of bushwhackers, Whig and Tory, began to harry the region, and the war degenerated into a hideous orgy of murder, arson and pillage, characterized by countless treasons and innumerable atrocities.

Andrew's elder brother, Hugh, had joined the command of Colonel Davie, had fought at the battle of Stono, and had died of fatigue and exposure. Then the dreaded Tarleton burst upon the Waxhaws and Andrew Jackson got his first close view of war when he went with his mother to the old church to attend the wounded gathered there.

What would a pugnacious, red-headed boy do in such circumstances? At fourteen Andrew was already tall, although extremely thin and gangling. But the bushwhackers were not scrupulous about age-limits. A rifle

was a rifle, and a British soldier or, better, a Tory, shot by a fourteen-year-old boy was as dead as any other corpse. So it was inevitable that Andrew and his remaining brother, Robert, should presently find themselves in a Whig band.

But the Waxhaw Whigs had grown so active that Rawdon sent from Camden a patrol of dragoons to suppress them. The patrol surprised the Jackson brothers' band and scattered it, the boys saving themselves by breakneck flight through the woods. Late at night they crept back to a kinsman's house, where they were promptly betrayed by a Tory neighbor. The house was quietly surrounded by dragoons, the doors secured, and the boys captured.

The subaltern in command presumably was none too well pleased when he entered the house and found that his haul consisted of a couple of children. At any rate, he was in no pleasant temper when the prisoners were brought before him, and Andrew Jackson found himself for the first time facing a representative of the King's Majesty. Chagrined, enraged, frightened, but still defiant, the two youngsters waited to hear their doom. It was more terrible, when it came, than the worst they had feared. They were not to be given the death of a soldier by shooting. They were not even to have the poor dignity of death on the gallows as spies. The order was nothing so glorious, even if terrible. The

order was simply to clean the officer's mud-spattered jack-boots.

The officer got precisely what was given the boys who had overloaded the gun—an explosion of wrathful defiance. It was too much for his overstrained temper. His sabre flashed. Andrew's left hand flew up, and checked, but did not stop the blow. Blood gushed from gashes in hand and scalp, and from that day he carried a great scar across his head.

The infuriated Briton then turned upon Robert and struck him to the floor. He never entirely recovered from the wound.

Such was Andrew Jackson's first face-to-face encounter with the British. Aching, bleeding, half stunned, the boys were marched off, surrounded by dragoons, to the prison camp at Camden.

CHAPTER III

How Master Jackson Was Convinced that War Is No Trifling Matter.

IT was forty long miles to Camden town and when one travels with a gashed hand and a split scalp, forty miles on horseback are a journey to be remembered. When in addition, one is only fourteen years old, and has seen the promise of a glorious military career end in an order to clean jackboots; when one has been captured without firing a shot, wounded without honor, fallen into the hands of a derisive and undamaged enemy, then a ride of forty miles without medical attention, without food, without water, is an ordeal fit to create in one's breast a raging hell able to sear one's mind for life.

This was the beginning of young Andrew Jackson's experience of the reality of war. But it was only the beginning. Arrived at Camden, the prisoners were thrown into a stockade around the jail, with two hundred and fifty other unfortunates.

The horrors of Libby and Elmira and the prison hulks of the Civil War are well remembered, but the most noisome of them was no worse than Camden during the

British occupation. The blithe informality of the Revolution was well illustrated by the refusal of either side to take seriously its responsibility for prisoners. There is no convincing evidence that Lord Rawdon was particularly vicious. He was an excellent officer and probably as humane as the average soldier of his time. But the prison camp he maintained at Camden would be regarded today as ample reason for his enemy to hang him, if he were captured.

The prisoners had no beds or bedding. They had no medicines. Many of them were wounded, but they had no medical attention. Their only food was a little bad bread, although, to do Lord Rawdon justice, that apparently was due to the thieving of a rascally contractor, presumably an American. There is a story to the effect that young Jackson, having caught the attention of a British subaltern, explained the food situation and horrified the Briton, who instituted an investigation that partially corrected it. Possibly Jackson's distaste for army contractors had its inception there. At any rate when he laid hands on half a dozen men of that trade at New Orleans forty years later, it was with the greatest difficulty that he was dissuaded from hanging them without much inquiry as to their guilt or innocence of the charges on which they had been taken. Such gusto in prosecution argues a long-standing, ingrained dislike, although it must be admitted that it seems to be the sol-

dier's customary attitude toward men who provision the army.

The prisoners were in many instances improperly clothed, and it is said that such clothing as they had was sometimes stolen from them. Fortunately, spring comes early in South Carolina, or probably none would have survived; but, at that, suffering from cold was added to suffering from hunger, from festering, unattended wounds, and from filth, in that pestilential hole. Ere long a worse thing happened. Smallpox broke out.

A generation that has seen smallpox reduced to an affliction hardly more dangerous than a cold in the head finds it hard to imagine what the disease meant in 1781. The triumph of modern medicine is in the fact that there is now nothing with which to compare the effect then produced upon the minds of a community by the discovery of smallpox. The thing that today comes nearest to producing a comparable state of terror is the discovery of Bubonic Plague. The fatality of smallpox then was not far from that of the Plague today; but smallpox was far more terrible because no one understood how to control it as well as we know now how to control the Plague.

Thus Andrew found himself confined in a narrow inclosure with a crowd of men infected with one of the most dreaded diseases known, and without medicines, doctors or nurses. Hungry, cold, dirty, miserable, with

the prospect of a particularly loathesome death before him, only one more touch of hardship could be added, and that was not slow in coming.

Greene and Cornwallis had collided at Guilford Courthouse, and both had suffered from the blow. Cornwallis staggered eastward, toward the sea and Yorktown; and Greene, having somewhat repaired his shattered columns, let him go and turned southward to clear out the lower country. Late in April he arrived in front of Camden. But he had outmarched his artillery, and Lord Rawdon had fortified the place too well for unsupported infantry to take it by assault. Therefore Greene occupied Hobkirk's Hill, just outside the town, and waited for the guns to come up.

The American lines were in plain sight of the prison stockade, and for some days the prisoners were subjected to the fate of Tantalus, having relief within sight but not quite within reach. The American commander, however, underestimated Rawdon. The British officer, although he was heavily outnumbered, refused to wait and be caught like a rat in a trap. Early in the morning of April 24 he slipped out of the town, around Greene's flank, and fell on him furiously. The prisoners, eagerly watching the fight, had the mortification of seeing their countrymen taken completely by surprise and ignominiously routed.

Rescue had been cruelly dangled before their eyes

and then snatched away! Thus was added to the cup of their woe the last misery of the wretched—hope deferred, which maketh the heart sick.

Robert Jackson had never fully recovered from the sabre-cut he received on the night of his capture, and he was now down with smallpox. A few days after the fight on Hobkirk's Hill Andrew sickened also. The annals of the house of Jackson seemed about to be closed.

But Elizabeth, the indomitable, was still alive and vigorously at work. From a Whig bushwhacker she secured the promise of thirteen British soldiers for exchange, and with them she purchased the liberty of her sons and five other Americans. But she came almost too late. Robert was more dead than alive. He could not stand, or even sit on horseback without being held, while Andrew was burning with fever. Nevertheless, the start was made toward home. Two horses were secured, and on one of them Robert was held, while the mother rode the other. Andrew dragged along on foot with the other freed men.

They had almost traversed the endless forty miles when a terrific rainstorm overtook them and the sick boys were drenched with cold water. The smallpox, in the vernacular of the time, "struck in." Within forty-eight hours Robert was dead and Andrew was raving in delirium. But Elizabeth Jackson was not yet beaten. What a battle she fought for the life of her sole remain-

ing child can never be known, but she pulled him through. For months he was a wreck, but within a few weeks he was clearly out of danger.

The war, however, was not through with Andrew Jackson yet. At Camden his mother had seen what a prison camp might be, and it was now with a new understanding that she heard the terrible wail that came up from the prison ships at Charleston, where many of the men of the Waxhaws, her friends and neighbors, were confined. Having obeyed the Scriptural injunction to care first for them of her own house, she turned now toward others. This new country had exacted a frightful toll from her. She had given it her husband. She had given it her first-born, Hugh. She had given it Robert. Only grudgingly had it left to her Andrew, her baby, and it had left him spent and broken.

But patriotism thrives on sacrifice. None know so well how to love a country as those whose hearts it has broken. None are so ready to respond to its call as those who have already given it tribute of blood and tears without stint. Elizabeth Jackson, who had already, God knows, done her part, could not rest idly while there remained anything she could do. Therefore, having seen Andy out of the shadow of death, in the summer of 1781 she set out for Charleston to help relieve the sufferings of his comrades-in-arms.

The good that women do does not always live after

them. The record of that journey is simply non-existent. Tradition has it that Elizabeth Jackson trudged the hundred and sixty miles on foot; but it is more probable—and her son so believed—that she made the trip on horseback, leading a pack-animal loaded with medicines and small comforts for the imprisoned men.

But the tale of her ministrations is lost altogether. All we know is that she arrived at her destination, and there is tragic evidence that she worked with the prisoners, for presently she contracted ship-fever and at the house of one William Barton, two and a half miles from Charleston, she died and was buried on the open plain.

So passed the last of the family of Andrew Jackson, none killed by an enemy bullet, but all victims of the war. Patriots all, all dead on the field of honor, yet they gained no glory and no renown. To this day they lie in unmarked graves, and except for the fortuitous circumstance that the sole survivor of the family later gained distinction, the story of their struggles, of their anguish and their sorrow would have been utterly lost as the stories of millions of other sufferers in that and other wars have been lost.

And so, ere he had passed his fifteenth birthday, Andrew Jackson knew about war. Some maker of epigrams has said that no man is really educated until he knows the three great verities of life, poverty, and love,

and war. In two of these the child was already so well instructed that the lessons could never be forgotten. Poverty had been his familiar since his birth; now war also was known to him.

The feeble, disease-racked body crawled slowly back to health, although a lingering, intermittent fever clutched him long after the smallpox had disappeared. But the numbed soul was past recovery. Andrew Jackson, a romanticist in so many ways, was the sharpest of realists in all matters touching war. He used the pageantry and pomp of militarism for his own purposes, knowing how powerfully the minds of men react to glitter and brave colors and the music of military bands. But he was never himself deceived. War, as he conceived it, was war as he had seen it in the Carolinas, that is, the business of killing. When Jackson went to war, he went for the purpose of killing his enemy wherever he found him. Rules and regulations, international law, the code of chivalry and every other impediment went by the board when he took the field.

All the resources of sophistry have been exhausted in efforts to justify the ruthlessness of Jackson as a commander according to the rules framed by romantic soldiers out of military colleges, but the effort has been in vain. The rules of what we dub "civilized" warfare were for the most part framed by military pedants whose minds were stuffed with story-book notions of chivalry

and whose idea of a soldier included vague associations with bright swords, shining armor, the courtesy of a tournament, and the gorgeousness of a guard-mount at Buckingham Palace.

But Jackson was not that kind of soldier and for the best of reasons—he couldn't be. His idea of war was gained from intimate contact with the grim reality, in the hellish campaign of the Carolinas. It began with close-range observation of the harvest of a battlefield gathered in old Waxhaw church. "The men were dreadfully mangled," says one account. "Some had as many as thirteen wounds and none had less than three." It included observation of Sumpter's fight at Hanging Rock, which was lost through poor discipline, and Andrew did not forget the lesson. It proceeded with days and nights of terror when Tory bands ranged through the country, massacring, burning and pillaging. It comprised two experiences of that most miserable of all war's calamities, the flight of refugees. It involved the brutality of the British officer with the sabre, and the experience of being a wounded prisoner in a pestilence-ridden camp. Above all, with Hugh and Robert dead of exposure and disease and Elizabeth dead through her ministrations to prisoners, it steeled him to contemplate without revulsion what war brings to non-combatants. At fifteen he did not know soldiering, but he knew war. As a child it was already burnt into him that re-

gardless of the panoply and all the brave array, the banners, the music, the parades and pageants, the end and aim of the whole business is death.

At fifteen the harrows of hell had passed over him, and forever after in the war he was a grim realist. Inveterate romanticist as he was, in this particular romance had been cauterized. It was thenceforth impossible for him to become a bandbox soldier. He might, indeed, strut in gaudy uniforms and receive gracefully the plaudits of the ladies while in garrison, but in the field he stripped off the frippery and became a hard and dangerous man, a killer, pure and simple.

Incidentally, he became a winner.

CHAPTER IV

How Mr. Jackson Became the Embodiment of Law and Order.

SLOWLY the disease-racked body dragged back to health. As the soldiers streamed home from the army they found a curious man-child in this bit of the war storm's wreckage. Men live fast in war, and this boy, not yet fifteen, had known camp and field and prison. His youth was burnt up in the war, and he jumped straight from infancy to manhood. He was tall enough to pass for a man, and his eyes had looked on that which it is not well to see too early, for it causes the observer to put away childish things.

Within a few months enough vitality had returned to Andrew Jackson's gangling frame to enable him to quarrel with a quarter-master Captain billeted in the same house. Tradition has it that this man raised his hand to strike, but that he encountered the blaze of those eyes before which better men were to quail, and a warning, shrill no doubt, but deadly serious, not to let that hand fall unless he had made his preparations for eternity. He did not strike, but doubtless found other ways to make things unpleasant, for shortly thereafter An-

drew removed to the house of one Joseph White, whose son was a saddler. The newcomer undertook that trade and worked at it for six months as often as the lingering fever would allow.

But now he encountered a new element, one that had not entered his life before. The city of Charleston in 1782 was still occupied by the British and a number of Charlestonians whiled away the time in the Waxhaw neighborhood waiting for the evacuation of their town. Among them were several young bloods of the place and Andrew Jackson fell in with these. Charleston was at the time one of the most highly civilized places on the continent, and its wealthier citizens were as well schooled in the art of gay and graceful living as any Americans of their age. The temporary exiles carried to the Waxhaws their ideas of diversion, and with nothing to do but wait for the evacuation of the city they relieved the tedium with all the sports their ingenuity could suggest. Racing, cock-fighting, drinking and gambling at cards were surely no novelties even in the Waxhaws, but the Charlestonians did all these things—as, indeed, they do them to this day—with an air. There is evidence that Jackson fell into a way of life which the grave Parton calls "more merry than wise." It is difficult to understand how a saddler's apprentice maintained the pace. But he did, and came out of the experience with a horse and a little money, for

when the city was evacuated in December, 1782, he mounted his horse and followed his fine friends to Charleston.

Unfortunately, there is no adequate record of that sojourn. If we were acquainted with the details of Andrew's first visit to the most polished city in the counry, perhaps we might have a flood of light on his subsequent behavior. At any rate, he did not abide long, and all that comes down to us of his experience there is the manner in which he was cured of dicing. His funds were exhausted and his tavern bill unpaid when he ran into a game. One of the gamblers offered to lay two hundred dollars against his horse. He reflected, decided that if he lost he could give the landlord his saddle and bridle in part payment of his bill and walk out of town, and then accepted. He won. The next morning he settled his bill, left Charleston and never bet on the dice again in his life.

The first encounter of a raw country lad with a highly sophisticated community may be comic to the town but it is frequently nothing short of tragic to the boy. What Andrew Jackson suffered in Charleston we do not know, but it is certain that none of the friendships thus begun lasted; and it is certain that on his return to the Waxhaws he adopted a different mode of life. It is obvious that something brought him to believe that he had been pursuing an unprofitable course; what that something

may have been we can only guess, but the lad came back from Charleston sobered and serious.

Apparently he turned schoolmaster. In view of his later difficulties with the English language the statement seems absurd, but at that time, and for many decades thereafter, pedagogy was not a profession, nor even a trade, but a stop-gap for the efficient who were momentarily out of a job and the last woeful recourse of the physically and mentally unskilled. There is, then, nothing startling in the fact that Andrew Jackson taught school for the two or three years that he found himself at loose ends. It does not imply that he really liked teaching, or that he considered himself particularly well fitted for the career of a schoolmaster. It indicates merely that he had nothing else to do at the moment and wished to accumulate some money.

He intended to study law. Just when he arrived at that decision is unknown, but it may well have been at the end of the Charleston adventure, and it certainly was some time between 1782 and 1785, for in the winter of 1784-5 he gathered together all his worldly possessions and set out in quest of a master in jurisprudence.

It was an auspicious moment, for the peace of 1783 swept the Troy barristers out of the courtroom and flooded the surviving Whig lawyers with more business than they could handle. Thus the law was in itself a promising career, and it was then, as it has remained

ever since in the South, the open road to political preferment. Nor were the difficulties in the way of an aspirant for license to practice great enough to discourage a youth in Jackson's position. Technical examinations were relatively easy and educational qualifications non-existent. Therefore Jackson's resolve to become a lawyer was by no means an absurd aspiration.

He rode north seventy-five miles from the Waxhaws to Salisbury, North Carolina, and then turned west sixty miles farther, to Morganton, where resided Colonel Waightstill Avery, who possessed what was said to be the best law library in the State. But Morganton, at the foot of the mountains, was almost the last outpost of civilization, and Colonel Avery, while he might have had a fine library, had only a log cabin to house it and his family. There was no room for a student, no matter how promising, and Jackson turned back to Salisbury, probably little guessing that he was to meet Waightstill Avery again and under far less pleasant circumstances—to shoot at him, in fact, and receive his fire.

At Salisbury he entered the law office of Spruce Macay, a lawyer of some eminence and later a jurist of distinction, and here, and in the office of Colonel John Stokes, a soldier of the Revolution, Jackson completed his education for the bar.

Salisbury was then a village of a few hundred souls, but it was already old, as American towns measure age,

and, considering the sparse settlement of the country round about, it was a center of importance. It had not the metropolitan air of Charleston, to be sure, but by comparison with the Waxhaws it was highly urban. There were cock-fighting, racing, dancing, drinking and gambling in plenty in the little town, and to the youth from the Waxhaws it was doubtless anything but dull.

At any rate, he enlivened it no little. He fell in with two boon companions, also law students, McNairy and Crawford, two names that figure often in the history of Andrew Jackson although borne by various men. All three were lively, vigorous, avid of life and experience, and, in the vernacular of the countryside, they painted the town red. For two generations Salisbury was full of tales of their exploits but, while they unquestionably shocked the grave and godly, there is little evidence that their ebullitions were much worse than the ordinary pranks of schoolboys, although drinking and gambling figured in them more frequently than they do in modern schools.

Jackson was long-legged, which made him a competitor to be feared in footraces, which were then greatly in favor as a sporting event. Parton recounts the legend of a quarter-mile race he ran against a giant named Hugh Montgomery, giving Montgomery a handicap of half the distance while Montgomery gave him the han-

dicap of carrying a man on his back. Jackson won, but only by a yard or two, for Montgomery finished strong. The only damage was suffered by the man Montgomery carried, for the giant in his frenzied effort had squeezed him so tightly and shaken him so severely that he was in bad shape at the end.

There is also the yarn of the great ball to which Jackson, as one of the managers, sent tickets to two notorious women who promptly presented themselves and all but broke up the party. This story presents two points of interest. First, it seems to be evidence of a sense of humor in the man, evidence which is rare indeed in the story of his life. Second, it is the sole well-authenticated story that connects Jackson in any way with women of dubious morals. With all the cock-fighting, drinking and gambling he has left a record unusually clear of sexual irregularities. This applies not to his life in Salisbury, alone, but to his whole career.

Yet of his profound masculinity there can be no doubt. The truth probably is that Jackson was blessed, or cursed, with a certain inability to approach women. He was bashful. Doubtless he labored under a painfully acute appreciation of his own disadvantages in the presence of the other sex. He was long, gangling, skinny. His hair was dangerously close to red. His nose was long and sharp. He had a chin like the prow of a battleship and even in youth his face was probably lined. No

one could have called him handsome, and he was as well aware of the fact as was his successor in the Presidency, Woodrow Wilson, to whom, in fact, he bore some physical resemblance. Furthermore, Jackson was a nobody. The son of immigrants, an orphan of the Revolution, without money and with but dubious prospects, ungraceful and without physical beauty, how could he have fancied himself a Don Juan?

Yet he had one feature that in later years proved highly effective with the ladies. That was a pair of fine eyes, deep blue, extremely bright, quick and intelligent. Those eyes were remembered by men, as well as women. The troops that dubbed him "Old Hickory" remembered them and shuddered, for when there was mutiny in the ranks or the threat of a break under fire they developed a blue blaze that made them like the eyes of the basilisk. The man who looked into them then knew that they would haunt his nightmares forever.

The two years in Salisbury were perhaps the merriest, most care-free days that Andrew Jackson ever knew. On the wide, tree-shaded streets, in Spruce Macay's tiny, shingled box of an office under the elms, before the roaring log-fire in the common room of the old Rowan Tavern carousing with Crawford and McNairy, he was at ease, among equals, free from the suspicion of intrigue, free from the suspicion of contumely, free from the spurrings of ambition. It is significant that the Salis-

bury years were almost entirely free from quarrels. The tortured spirit was for the moment at peace with itself, and therefore with all the world.

They passed, as halcyon days will do, and the newly-fledged attorney pushed farther north, to Martinsville, county-seat of Guilford county, near the present city of Greensboro. What he did there is uncertain. Perhaps he practiced law in Guilford county. Martinsville itself has disappeared, and is now preserved only in the name of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse; and the traces of Andrew Jackson's residence there have gone as completely as the village itself. He said himself that he had two friends who kept a store there, and it is probable that in their establishment he learned something of the mercantile business that later he was to put to good use.

But in the meantime, beyond the great barrier of the Appalachians, affairs had been moving in a direction and at a rate sufficiently disturbing to citizens of the Old North State. The territory known to Jackson's youth as Washington County, North Carolina, was in an uproar. Since the days before the Revolution settlers had been trickling into that region and getting themselves involved in difficulties with the Indian inhabitants. Appeals were constantly coming over the mountains for troops and money to suppress Indian uprisings. The region seemed likely to be nothing but a burden and an

expense to the State for an indefinite time, and it occurred to some thrifty genius among the Tar Heels to cede it to the general government in part payment of North Carolina's share of the Revolutionary war debt. But the legislature inserted in the law a provision that the offer must be accepted within two years.

This was construed by the inhabitants of the western country to mean two years with no government at all, whereupon they declared themselves independent of North Carolina and set up a State of their own, naming it after Franklin and choosing John Sevier, a famous and picturesque frontiersman, as its first Governor. There ensued a season of anarchy, with two sets of officers, one representing North Carolina, the other the State of Franklin, one set undoing the work of the other, mobs colliding, and innumerable individual encounters with some bloodshed. But at last the appeal to the people made by Governor Caswell, of North Carolina, was accepted by the majority and the State of Franklin melted away, not without leaving rancor and disturbances behind it.

At this juncture John McNairy, a friend of Jackson's, was appointed judge of the Superior Court for that district and Jackson went out with him to see the country. But he liked it so well he never returned, and some months after his arrival he was named solicitor, or public prosecutor. It was not a desirable office. The dis-

trict lay five hundred miles from the settled portion of the State in what was regarded by Tar Heels as a howling wilderness inhabited by a turbulent population with neither partiality nor respect for judges, much less prosecuting attorneys. But for a young man without prospects it was at least a start, and Jackson accepted.

Salisbury must have gasped. Andrew Jackson, named to enforce law and order in a wild country—Jackson, the cock-fighter, Jackson who scandalized the ladies at the ball, Jackson who wrecked the dining room in the Rowan Tavern one night after a banquet with a select group of friends, Jackson the rowdy, the holy terror, selected to impress the western country with the dignity and majesty of the law!

Yet for the region that was to become the State of Tennessee, the embodiment of law and order he was.

CHAPTER V

How Solicitor Jackson Found Tennessee His Oyster.

IN the year 1788 Tennessee was tough. In referring to the mental and moral condition of the pioneers, Americans are accustomed to employ scholarly words sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought until they have become euphemisms. We call the frontier crude, primitive, indisciplined, uncouth; but none of these, nor the sum of them, describes the community with the precision and force of the colloquialism. Tennessee was tough.

That is to say, it was not merely crude, primitive, indisciplined and uncouth. It was also vicious to a certain extent and in a certain way. But its vices, like its virtues, were characterized by a sort of heartiness that set them apart from the corresponding vices of more settled communities. Tennessee was the Wild West of 1788, exhibiting all the fascination and all the shortcomings of, say, Wyoming in 1888. The country was infested with Indians. The first settlers were always adventurous spirits and not infrequently had left Virginia, or North Carolina, for reasons which it were better not to examine too closely. Many of them, however, had the

most respectable and legitimate of reasons for their presence, namely, grants of land made to them by their mother State in return for their services as Revolutionary soldiers. However, the present generation has learned by experience that the former service man is not necessarily a model Sunday School scholar; and it seems that it was so in Tennessee in 1788.

This is not to be construed as an intimation that the inhabitants of Tennessee at that time were all rogues. They were not. They were frontiersmen. They were conquering and holding a wilderness, which is a task not to be accomplished in a ladylike manner or by ladylike persons. The necessities of their case made their philosophy largely

> "the good old rule, the simple plan—
> Let him take who has the power, let him keep who can."

When differences arose between them they were little disposed to let lawyers argue it out. They went about the settlement in a more direct and simple fashion that paid no heed to the law either of the land or of the Marquis of Queensberry. An extract from an old court record of Tennessee throws a flood of light on the problem faced by peace officers of the time. It reads:

> Whereas, in an affray that happened on the second day of September, 1793, between Wm. Pillows and Abram

Denton, in fighting, the said Pillows bit off the uper eend of Denton's right year, upon which s^d^ Pillows come into open court together with Abram Denton, and the s^d^ Pillows openly declared that he bit of his year aforesaid, without any intention of injuring s^d^ Denton.

And^w^ Wickerham b'ng sworn, say^th^ y^t^ he saw Wm. Hamilton go to turn ye Deft out of his house, on which y^e^ s^d^ Deft. resisted; & they laid hold on one another and fell, y^e^ plff. uppermost: And when they were parted, he saw y^t^ y^e^ s^d^ plff.' nose was bit, but saw no blows pass.

Jas. Buchanan and Wm. Simpson corroborated y^e^ ab've.

As in the West of the James brothers and Buffalo Bill and Wild Bill Hickok, in the Tennessee of 1788 homicide was regarded as murder only in case the victim had no chance to defend his life. If a man were killed in a fair fight, it was not regarded as good form for the officers to be too inquisitive; while the *code duello* was the recognized method for the settlement of gentlemen's disputes.

Into this country came Andrew Jackson, twenty-one years old, to enforce the law. To send an ordinary boy of twenty-one on such a mission would be little short of murderous, but Jackson when he reached his majority was no ordinary youth. He was set apart from his contemporaries not merely by his intellectual endowment and his temperament, but also by his experience. For all his gusto, for all his high animal spirits, at twenty-

one he was a hard-bitten man. If Tennessee was tough, her new prosecuting attorney was no tenderfoot. He had been through war and poverty. Wounds, hunger, back-breaking toil, spirit-breaking disappointment, loss and grief were all old acquaintances. The tall, thin, sandy-haired youth with the brilliant dark blue eyes could look upon his turbulent district without a quiver. Nothing it could do to him would be worse than that which he had already survived.

There is a story that during the long trek over the Appalachians and down through Piedmont Tennessee to the valley of the Cumberland river his party was once almost ambuscaded by hostile Indians, and was saved only by the keenness of Jackson's ear in noting something peculiar in the hooting of the owls in the trees around the camp—hoots that were in reality the signals of a war-party closing in upon the travelers. It is certain that the party traveled under military escort part of the way, as did everyone who attempted that particular bit of road.

At any rate, by the time he reached the scene of his future labors the new attorney understood thoroughly the sort of life that was before him. But he was well prepared for it. Life had always been a stern affair for him, always a fight for subsistence in a ruthless world. He carried no excess baggage. He was in touch with fundamentals. It seemed perfectly reasonable to him

that a man should expect to advance in the world only as the strength of his own arms is able to hew a path for him. His own strength of body, of mind and of character had brought him so far. He was perfectly willing to match it against the stoutest that Tennessee could produce, and to abide by the result.

For such a man the stage was beautifully set. The only other licensed attorney in western Tennessee had been retained by all the debtors in the region. Therefore there was no one whom creditors could employ to bring action in the courts. The issuance of writs against debtors was a thankless and sometimes a dangerous task, but the merchants of Nashville found in the new arrival a man not daunted by thankless and dangerous tasks. It is said that before Jackson had been in Nashville a month he was employed in seventy such cases.

It was the custom then for attorneys to appear at every court held in the State, and after a careful survey of distances Parton estimates that during his first seven years Jackson spent half his time traveling. That meant traversing the wilderness on horseback, in imminent danger from storms, floods and Indians. Twice, at least, Jackson was all but drowned trying to cross swollen streams. Many times he was benighted and compelled to make camp in the midst of the forest in rainstorms and snowstorms. Again and again he had encounters with hostile Indians, and once he escaped only by a

forced march of sixty hours. In those seven years he traveled between Nashville and Jonesboro, a distance of two hundred miles, twenty-two times; and that was only one of many directions in which his trips took him.

But he prospered. Not all the cases in the Tennessee courts of those days had to do with the biting off of the "eends of years." There was plenty of work in civil practice which brought in fees worth while. Much of the lawyer's pay was in the form of land, frequently disposed of by the "six-forty" which meant six hundred and forty acres, or a square mile. In the years between 1788 and 1795 Jackson laid the foundation of a respectable fortune, for he held on to much of the land given him as fees and it rose rapidly in value.

In later years it was asserted and argued with some plausibility that he never knew any law, and from that it was assumed that he must have been a poor lawyer, which does not follow at all. Indeed, the admitted facts obviously controvert any such assumption. What is a good lawyer? A man deeply learned in the science may be an excellent jurisconsult and still lose his cases, while many another whose knowledge of the law is of the sketchiest nevertheless is in constant demand, for somehow he contrives to win. The client is not interested in the untangling of juristic knots or the illumination of constitutional principles. The client wishes

to win his case, and the lawyer who can win is a good enough lawyer for him.

Andrew Jackson won his cases, or a proportion of them sufficiently large to inspire the community with confidence in his ability. It is no unusual thing to find in the court records that he was employed in a fourth to a half of the cases on the docket. But the practice of law in Tennessee at that time was far different from practice in the same courts today. Tennessee was the frontier then, and every frontier has a disconcerting way of drawing a distinction between law and justice. Tennessee believed in justice, and Tennessee courts had a way of striding straight toward what seemed to be essentially just regardless of legal entanglements.

The chances are that Jackson's equipment was more substantial than some of his critics have been willing to admit, since Spruce McCay was a learned man and Jackson, for all his uproarious amusements in Salisbury, was at bottom a serious fellow. He rarely let opportunities slip in later days. It is incredible that he wasted two whole years at Salisbury.

But at all events, when he arrived in Tennessee he knew the art of persuading juries that his was the cause of justice, and with that art at his command he could win verdicts in frontier courts over any opponent who seemed to have the law, but not justice, on his side.

Action and reaction, however, are admitted to be equal

and opposite. Out of this practice in the Tennessee courts Jackson emerged with the viewpoint of the frontier, as regards law and justice. Perhaps he carried it into the frontier courts, in which case he must have been strengthened by his experience there in his opinion that it is much more important to achieve essential justice than to adhere strictly to the fine points of the law. If he did not carry it in, he must have gained that opinion there, for it is certain that as the years wore on his superb disdain of technicalities lent color to the theory that he never had been schooled in reverence for the theory that freedom broadens down from precedent to precedent.

And indeed it would be idle to attempt to set up the claim that Andrew Jackson was ever a master of jurisprudence. On at least two occasions on simple points of law he fell into errors that all but ruined him. One was the case of his marriage to a woman not yet divorced from her former husband; the other was the case of the Allison lands, although in the latter case two other lawyers were as much at fault as Jackson. Certainly no man well trained in the written law would be guilty of errors so damaging to his own interests.

The facts seem to be that Jackson was admirably equipped for practice in the Tennessee courts of the last decade of the eighteenth century, and that the equipment requisite to successful practice in those courts was

highly specialized. It did not require any profound knowledge of the law, but it did require a profound knowledge of the people and their ways, courage and the ability to believe in one's cause and to convince others of its justice.

All these Jackson had, and the latter, in particular, he developed to a high degree. He was Scotch-Irish, that is, of a race that has always taken itself seriously. He knew the serious side of life and but little of any other. Almost his earliest recollections had to do with the most serious business in the world, war. He was a soldier of the Revolution and took just pride in the fact. He was a victim of the Revolution, and therefore felt that he had a claim on the respect of the country. He was a young man with his own way to make in the world against the handicaps of poverty, ignorance and humble birth. This combination is enough to extinguish the sense of humor of a Cervantes, not to mention a Scotch-Irishman.

At all events humor was effectually extinguished in Andrew Jackson by the time he arrived in Tennessee. In his law practice it was probably an advantage. It enabled him to take with the utmost seriousness the cases that came his way and to inject into his pleas to the jury a fervent passion that must have been mightily effective among the frontiersmen.

In turn, the advisability of making his client's cause

his own in the courtroom must have reacted upon him, strengthening his already strong tendency to identify himself with whatever project he might take up. But, whether because he did not remain in active practice long enough or whether he lacked the capacity to do it, he never developed the faculty which marks the facile lawyer of dissociating himself and his case when he leaves the courtroom. Jackson could persuade juries because he had first persuaded himself; but he never developed that smooth perfection of technique in forgetting his own arguments once the case was won which makes many veteran lawyers so rascally and so charming.

Jackson quit active practice comparatively early, but he remained the advocate for the rest of his days. Into all that he undertook he threw the passionate earnestness that marks the successful lawyer in the courtroom; but Jackson practiced it on the battle field, in legislative halls and in the council chamber. And the reaction to him was precisely the reaction to the lawyer fighting a case: to those whose views he happened to represent, he was indubitably the greatest man in the world, and to the opposition he was a devil incarnate.

If he had taken himself less seriously, if he had been touched with humor, he might have lived an easier and pleasanter life. But he would not have been Andrew Jackson, and it is highly improbable that he would have been President of the United States.

CHAPTER VI

How His Ignorance of the Law Betrayed Attorney Jackson into the Wisest Act of His Life.

THE best place in Nashville for a young bachelor to live in 1788 was at the house of the Widow Donelson. She had come out from Virginia with her husband, Colonel John Donelson, a surveyor, eight years previously, in an Odyssey without parallel in the annals of Tennessee, if, indeed, it can be matched anywhere. The party had traveled in flat-boats down the river Holston to the Tennessee, down the Tennessee to the Ohio, up the Ohio to the Cumberland, and up the Cumberland to the townsite which had been occupied the previous year by an advance party of men only, under command of Captain James Robertson. It was a journey of two thousand miles never made before by any man, white or red; down rivers full of shoals, rapids and whirlpools, and it was made during one of the bitterest winters ever known in that region. Twice the party was attacked by Indians, and one boatload of travelers was captured because it lagged behind the others. But it was a costly victory for the Indians, for the reason the

boat lagged behind was that smallpox had broken out upon it. From the prisoners the Indians contracted the disease and died by hundreds later in the winter.

But the Donelsons survived. The Colonel, Mrs. Donelson and their daughter, Rachel, reached Nashville in safety and once there prospered exceedingly. The Colonel accumulated lands, houses, negroes, cattle and horses as rapidly as did the Patriarch Jacob. One winter he moved his household, probably on account of the local scarcity of corn, over into Kentucky and while there his daughter acquired a husband, Lewis Robards by name, and the family came back to Nashville without her. A little later Colonel Donelson went on a surveying trip far back into the wilderness, and one day his assistants came upon him lying by a creek in the woods, riddled with bullets. He had evidently fallen into an ambuscade, but whether it was laid by red men or white no one ever knew. His daughter always believed, however, that he fell at the hands of white brigands, for she thought no Indian could kill her father, so well versed was he in all the guile of Indian warfare.

At all events he was dead, and his widow, for all that she was a woman of property and a sort of matriarch in Nashville, thought it well to take in a boarder or two, for even in the town itself it did no harm to have an extra man about the place in case of an Indian raid. Among these boarders was a young lawyer named

John Overton, later to play a distinguished part in the history of Tennessee, and Overton it probably was who suggested the Widow Donelson's house as the proper place for Solicitor Jackson to board. The two young men were quartered in a cabin a few steps distant from the main house and the widow now felt that her place was well garrisoned, for her Kentucky son-in-law was with her, too.

Behind the presence of Robards, however, there lay rather a distressing story, for the marriage that Rachel had made in Kentucky had blown up with a terrific crash the previous year. This Robards seems to have been a moody, incalculable person and insanely jealous. The daughter of Colonel Donelson was a fine figure of a woman, black-haired, black-eyed, vivacious and buxom. She was the daughter of a born leader of men and of a woman who was evidently his worthy mate. She had survived the terrific journey in the flatboats. She had thrived upon the hardships of the frontier. She was lively, energetic, courageous and had a mind of her own. But there is the evidence of a long lifetime that she was also true. It seems more than probable that Robards presently found that he had married much above him, and the very merits of his wife made him resentful, irritable and suspicious. At any rate, he presently grew intensely jealous of an individual who has come down to history only as "a Mr. Short." Overton,

who was living in Kentucky at the time, testifies that Robards' own mother knew that his suspicions were idiotic and did her best to cure him of them, but to no avail. Lacking any sort of proof of misconduct on his wife's part, Robards ended by summarily dismissing her, notifying her family to come and get her for he would live with her no longer. Samuel Donelson, her brother, accordingly went up to Kentucky and brought her back to Nashville.

But when Overton later came down to Nashville, he was charged by the elder Mrs. Robards with the mission of effecting a reconciliation. Robards admitted to Overton that he had concluded that his jealousy was unfounded and wished to have his wife back. Overton was so admirable an advocate that the reconciliation was presently effected. Furthermore, Robards came to Tennessee. He had acquired some land lying about five miles from Nashville and proposed to occupy it. But at the time the territory lying five miles back from Nashville was actually No Man's land. With twenty thousand highly unreliable Indians for neighbors, living five miles away from the stockade was not to be thought of; therefore, until the country should be better settled, Robards took up his residence temporarily with his mother-in-law.

But that was a fatal mistake, for the jealous mood shortly returned upon him full force, and in place of

the obscure Mr. Short he fixed his suspicions this time upon Andrew Jackson. The tension in the household increased until Overton became uncomfortable, mentioned the matter to Jackson, and suggested that they seek another boarding place. This they did. But Jackson, highly incensed, insisted upon speaking to Robards about the matter. There are various accounts of the interview. The best, perhaps, is that of Overton, but it was written in 1827, when Jackson was a candidate for the Presidency, and is under suspicion as a campaign document. It would have us believe that the Solicitor's manner was mildly expostulatory; but even Overton admits that Robards found he was not dealing this time with another Mr. Short, and there is no doubt that the jealous husband very soon found it agreeable to retire to Kentucky. Another account avers that Jackson opened the interview with the promise that if Robards made one more remark connecting the names of the Solicitor and Mrs. Robards, he, Jackson, would take both Mr. Robards' ears off his head with a butcher-knife. This story is not so well authenticated as Overton's, but it has much more of a Jacksonian flavor. There is no doubt that Jackson was furious; and there is as little doubt that when Jackson was furious his conversation was not to be described as mildly expostulatory.

At any rate, Robards swiftly vanished over the Kentucky border. Jackson and Overton found another

boarding place, and Mrs. Robards went to live with a married sister whose home was at some distance.

But the mischief was done. Jackson, apparently for the first time in his life, found himself in a close personal relation with a woman, young, handsome and attractive. His life up to this point had been singularly clear of all feminine influence since the day when his mother started down toward the Charleston prison ships and death. The Salisbury episode of the ball and the ladies of easy manners was no more than a scapegrace prank, indicative of nothing more reprehensible than possession of a college boy's sense of humor.

His approaches to women, indeed, were marked by the extreme of punctilio. He was excessively polite, and it is probable that the stiffness of his social intercourse was the cause of no little giggling and perhaps some exasperation among the fair. The ruthlessness of women toward a bashful young man is not of recent origin and there is no reason to believe that their behavior patterns in Tennessee in 1790 differed essentially from those of the present.

But here was the irreproachable Mr. Jackson, the correct, the chivalrous, the impeccable Mr. Jackson, who was in reality the horribly bashful Mr. Jackson, suddenly accused of having seduced one of the prettiest, wealthiest and most popular young women in the community! What confusion existed in his mind may be

imagined. Once more, had he had a sense of humor he might have suffered less, for he would have appreciated the full absurdity of the fugitive Robards' charges. He would have realized that a mind like that of the departed husband would have been suspicious of Galahad himself; and realizing at once his own blamelessness and the impossibility of curing Robards of his obsession, he might have dismissed the whole business with a shrug. But if he had done so, he would have lost, for, as in the case of his law practice, Fate again was thrusting Jackson into a position from which he could not avoid profiting.

Consternation, wrath and sympathy for his fellow-victim combined to keep his attention centered upon Mrs. Robards, while the coarse violence of Robards had effectually shattered the barriers that Jackson's lack of facility with women might otherwise have raised between them. Presently he developed the idea that he was to some extent, no matter how innocently, responsible. In the modern phrase, he was ever a responsibility-fiend anyhow. Throughout his career he was incessantly assuming the responsibility for other people's deeds. Now he began to lament to Overton the bitterness of being the cause of a fine woman's unhappiness, and eventually he worked himself into the conviction that Mrs. Robards was his especial charge.

In another man this sudden sense of responsibility

might justify the suspicion that perhaps he had looked upon the pretty young matron with a wishful eye before Robards made a scene. It is possible, of course, in the case of Jackson, but it is by no means a necessary assumption. He so piqued himself on his own readiness to assume responsibility, he exhibited it so frequently, and sometimes so fantastically, that it seems adequate to explain his conduct in this affair without attributing to him any other motive.

There was no mail service to Nashville at this time, and no reliable means of communication; but after some months rumor brought word that Robards was preparing to return to Tennessee to collect his wife. True or false, Rachel believed the rumor, and was appalled. Two experiences of the jealousy and petty spirit of the man she reasonably deemed enough. She told Jackson that as far as Robards was concerned, she had done her full duty; and to avoid trouble with him she proposed to leave Nashville before he arrived. Accordingly she arranged to travel to Natchez with a certain Colonel Stark, who was preparing to make that rough and dangerous journey. Roads were non-existent. The rivers were the highway, and the forests along their banks were infested with Indians. Woman of the frontier though she was, Rachel would not have undertaken that trip for any light reason.

Then Jackson's overmastering sense of responsibility

rose upon him and flung him straight into a trap. He determined to constitute himself an extra guard, seeing that Colonel Stark was an old man. Overton insists that the Colonel urged him to do this, and that Jackson consented reluctantly. But by this time, if he had not confessed to himself that he was in love with Rachel, he had certainly made her cause completely his cause. And he must have been more, or less, than human if at twenty-four he required much urging to stand between a young and beautiful woman and a physical danger that was anything but imaginary. At any rate he went, and he must have known that in going he had at last given Robards something definite on which to feed his jealousy.

This is evident from the way he received the news when he was informed, a few months later, that Robards had divorced his wife. Apparently it never occurred to him to doubt either that the man had sued, or that the court had found in his favor. Shortly after the news arrived he went down to Natchez and married Rachel.

And so the Solicitor led the lady whom he considered under his special protection to commit bigamy. For Rachel was not divorced, and if Jackson had had anything like a thorough knowledge of the law, he would have known it. Robards was living in what is now Kentucky, but was then a part of Virginia, and under the law of Virginia even a suit for divorce could not be

brought except by special permission of the legislature. What had happened was that in the winter of 1790-91 Robards applied to the legislature, not for a divorce, but for permission to sue, which was granted. This permission did not affect the marriage in the least, and Robards, as a matter of fact, took no action for more than two years. Finally, when he did go into court in 1793, he had a perfect case. Andrew and Rachel had been living together as man and wife for two years.

And that is how Jackson acquired his equivalent for Cyrano's nose. The court could do nothing but grant Robards' petition on the ground that his wife was living in adultery with another man. The fact that the record scarred for life a perfectly innocent woman and a man guilty of nothing worse than ignorance of Virginia procedure could not be helped. There were the facts, and the court had to recognize them.

Jackson, of course, re-married Rachel as soon as the news of what had happened reached Nashville. Then he got out a pair of pistols, cleaned them, oiled them, tested the locks and put them in perfect condition to use upon the first man who made a slighting remark on the subject. Those pistols, says Parton, were kept ready for instant use for thirty-seven years. At least twice they were used. The first time no one was hurt except a bystander, presumably innocent, and he not badly. But the second time the offender died, and thereafter people

eschewed references to adultery when Andrew Jackson was within earshot.

In retrospect it seems to be a romance more Quixotic than Quixote himself. It was completely bare of the courtly trappings which we are so accustomed to associate with high romance that we confuse them with romance itself. To the outward view it was at best completely prosaic and at worst squalid, and in later years when Jackson was a candidate for office and therefore a shining target for every mud gun, it was given the worst possible appearance before the world. The last poor shreds of decent privacy were stripped from it, and Rachel was pilloried by creatures out of range of her husband's pistols. In the end they killed her.

But the match between the rash and impetuous frontier lawyer and the pioneer's daughter had in it, nevertheless, the golden thread of true love. A strange Prince Charming indeed was the lank, sandy-haired, horse-faced youth, and a stranger Princess was the hearty, vigorous, unlettered but not unskilled girl. But there is only one proof of a marriage and that is the test of time. This one stood it. Indeed, as the years passed the bond strengthened instead of weakening. Rachel would not have found approval in the eyes of a courtier from St. James'. Doubtless, she would have received no more than a supercilious smile from the fops and beaux of Philadelphia. But put to the test she re-

vealed the qualities that hold the heart of a husband. She was industrious, merry-hearted, loyal and kind. Although she had but little schooling, her mind was quick, active and retentive. Somehow she knew, without being taught, that art most valuable to the wife of a great man, the art of making his friends feel welcome and at ease in his house. She was an excellent housewife, and Jackson's home was run with what appeared to be effortless ease.

But all this, while it might have made him value her and respect her, does not sum up the account. He did not merely value her and respect her. He loved her, as well. In addition to the long list of her recognizable merits, Rachel had the intangible, indescribable thing called personality. Her husband adored her. With the stiff, dour quality of his race he could not rhapsodize his love. He could not write sonnets to her, or twang a guitar; but he could, and for thirty-five long years he did, treat her with a courtesy, consideration and thoughtfulness in which no amount of breeding could have perfected him. That came from the heart, not from the head.

Moderns are inclined to smile at the scene, often described, of Andrew Jackson sitting on one side of the hearth and his wife on the other, each puffing a long-stemmed clay pipe. But happiness and content are in the picture, happiness and content based upon a

love as true and strong as any that inspired troubadours to sing of knights and ladies in the courts of romance.

So out of the venomous attack of Robards, out of his own rash impetuosity Andrew Jackson drew the greatest good fortune of his life, a woman capable of inspiring Benton's fine line: "Her greatest eulogy is in the affection which he bore her living, and in the sorrow with which he mourned her dead."

CHAPTER VII

How Mr. Jackson Became a Western Bad Man and Was Greatly Respected.

THE marriage of Solicitor Jackson and the grass widow doubtless created plenty of gossip, but nothing resembling a sensation in Nashville at the time. As the bridegroom was not running for office then no one found it worth while to discover an outrage to morality in the affair. In the following October, in fact, Jackson was elected one of the trustees of Davidson Academy, a school which later became Nashville University. This board was made up of the most intensely respectable citizens of the place, including several clergymen, and it would never have admitted a man who had seriously damaged his social standing by a questionable matrimonial alliance. Nashville understood and obviously approved, except for that increasing number of persons who approved of nothing that Jackson did.

But Nashville was still a frontier hamlet, one of the last outposts of civilization. The white man's hold upon the country as yet was precarious in the extreme. There was constant trouble with the Cherokee Indians, original

possessors of the country now become wards of the government behind a line whose location was vague and hotly disputed. Hardly a week passed without news of some settler shot down while at work in the field, or ambushed along the forest trails. The region was now a Federal territory and the former Solicitor had become the United States District Attorney. But appeals to the government at Philadelphia were productive of no great results, for President Washington was too uncomfortably aware that justice was not always on the side of the white men to authorize war upon the Indians. On the contrary, Federal officers, including the District Attorney, were under instructions to keep the peace.

This was the state of affairs when General Robertson, the founder of Nashville, discovered a white boy who had been carried off as a captive by the Cherokees and had lived with them for years. He knew their mountain strongholds and all the paths leading to them. It was too great a stroke of fortune for a frontiersman to resist. Robertson therefore organized a punitive force, marched straight into the Cherokee territory, smashed stronghold after stronghold, and killed so many braves that it was years before a white settler was molested again. This was the famous Nickajack expedition of 1794.

Jackson was estopped by his official position from taking part in this expedition, which was in flat defiance of Federal authority, but there is no doubt about what he

thought of it. He was never a philosopher. He accepted the code of the time and the country. He had adopted Tennessee, and he never did things by halves. Henceforth he was for Tennessee first and foremost, and as a white man he was for the white men of Tennessee. It was obvious that as long as the Cherokee power existed, Tennessee was throttled; therefore the shattering of that power undoubtedly struck him as just, proper and altogether praiseworthy.

It is true that he profited by it enormously, but only as all the white inhabitants profited. As soon as the Indians were smashed, settlers began to pour into the valley of the Cumberland, and land values rose tremendously. Jackson already held much land and was rapidly acquiring more, and the rise in value swiftly made him a man of considerable wealth for a frontiersman.

But it would be stupid, as well as false, to assume therefore that he was actuated solely, or mainly, by the mercenary motive. He dramatized the struggle between the races, precisely as every imperialist before and since has dramatized it. He saw it, not as the ruthless extermination of a weak and backward race by a powerful and warlike one, but as the struggle of a handful of white men to hold their homes against thousands of fierce aborigines. He would have approved the Nickajack expedition if it had meant the loss of everything he

had in the world, instead of being the direct means of establishing his fortunes.

At twenty-seven one does not stop to formulate one's philosophy, but if Jackson had put his into words it would doubtless have expressed the belief that no race is entitled to hold a valuable part of the earth unless it makes the most of its holdings. Upon that theory he, with the rest of the pioneers, acted. Upon it Americans are still acting in various parts of the world today. Upon it they will continue to act as long as the nation continues to produce aggressive and adventurous spirits.

Perhaps it is appropriate here to sum up Jackson's attitude toward the weaker races, for if his intellectual vigor was not yet at its height, his character was formed by the time he reached the age of twenty-seven, and upon this subject, so far as we know, he never changed his views.

Jackson owned, certainly bought, and probably sold, Negro slaves. He harried the Indians in numerous campaigns, unquestionably approved the breaking of the Cherokees, and himself broke the Creeks and the Seminoles; and there is not a scintilla of evidence that his conscience reproached him for any of these activities. It is conceivable that he may have had moments when he regretted having hanged Francis, the Seminole chief; he may have regretted other specific incidents of his various wars against the Indians. But he no more re-

gretted having wiped them out as nations than George Washington regretted having broken British power in America. As to his Negroes, he believed it his duty to be a humane master, and he did his duty as he saw it. He readily admitted that to be a cruel slavemaster was to be infamous, but he saw nothing objectionable in being a slavemaster.

Now popular ethical concepts have advanced, or at least changed, so radically that today the mere ownership of a human slave is regarded as morally indefensible. Moreover, since the extinction of the Indian power and the rise of countless sentimental eulogists of the Noble Red Man, there has grown up a fairly widespread belief that the Indians were most unjustly treated by the pioneers. As touching specific instances, that belief is well founded. Time after time Indians have been swindled out of their unquestioned rights by rascally white men. But as regards the dispossession of the race, the judgment rendered against the whites ignores altogether the fundamental question, namely, had the Indian a right to hold America? Has any race the right to play dog in the manger, keeping the rest of the world out of a rich continent, without developing the resources of that continent for its own benefit?

Without hesitation Andrew Jackson said, No. More than that, the United States as a nation has been saying No ever since. We took Panama because the Colom-

bians would neither dig a canal themselves nor permit us to dig one. We employ our armed forces to suppress disorder to Central American and West Indian countries whenever disorder threatens to prevent the industrial development of such countries. Regardless of our theories, in action we do not admit mere occupation as a good title to the country occupied. Therefore Andrew Jackson's attitude toward the Indian was precisely Theodore Roosevelt's attitude toward the Panaman, and Calvin Coolidge's attitude toward the Nicaraguan. In that, Jackson was merely an American of the Americans.

The same thing applies to his slave-owning. It was the custom of the country, and it proves nothing about Jackson, good or bad, except that he was a man of his time, and not a seer, a sentimentalist, or a visionary.

In fact, at this period of his life he saw what was under his nose and saw it exactly as the average man saw it. The notable difference between him and the average man was that he took prompt and vigorous action upon what he saw. Therefore, while he did innumerable things which the average man was too indolent, too slow, or too cowardly to attempt, he did nothing that the average man could not understand perfectly. Herein lies a large part of the secret of his immense popularity in later years, for the people find it easier to forgive iniquity which they understand than subtlety which may

mean anything; and there were very few actions of Andrew Jackson which even his enemies could torture into anything really resembling iniquity in the eyes of the people.

But Jackson was as yet far from being a popular hero. As Solicitor, and later as District Attorney, he made friends, it is true, but he also raised a fine crop of enemies. Every rascal in the territory wished to see his downfall, and not a few sought to bring it about; while the ardency with which he espoused every cause that enlisted his services brought him frequently into conflict with honest men.

One of the earliest of these encounters was with Colonel Waightstill Avery, of North Carolina, the man to whom Jackson first turned when he sought a preceptor in the law. Colonel Avery did not practice widely in Tennessee, but he occasionally tried a case in Jonesboro court, and on one of these occasions he found Jackson his opponent. Avery was a first-rate lawyer, learned, experienced and urbane. Jackson knew it, and no doubt was uncomfortably aware of the advantage the older man had over him, and fiercely determined not to admit any consciousness of inferiority. The Colonel, not realizing the sensitiveness of his young opponent, made a biting comment on Jackson's handling of some point in the case, using, as he admitted later, more sarcasm than was called for. If Jackson made any verbal reply,

it is lost. Probably rage choked him into speechlessness. But he acted with characteristic promptness and vigor. Snatching a fly-leaf out of a law-book, he then and there wrote a challenge to mortal combat and had it passed to Colonel Avery.

The latter was in an embarrassing position. He was a man of family, he disapproved of duelling on principle, and he had nothing to gain and everything to lose by shooting this backwoods lawyer. But he would have been ruined altogether had he refused to fight after being challenged by a man of his own standing, a brother attorney, in fact. Therefore he accepted. They met after sunset and exchanged shots without casualties on either side. Then Avery, being evidently a man of humor as well as a man of honor, made a handsome apology for the incident in the courtroom and the business was closed in the friendliest fashion.

Not all of Jackson's encounters took place in such formal fashion, because few of his opponents were men of the dignity and social position of Colonel Avery. Much more typical of the time and place is a story that Parton quotes in Jackson's own words. He was then President, and was advising an intimate friend, who expected to be assailed in the street for his support of the administration. In such case, said Jackson, don't swing at the assailant's head with your stick, for he will ward off the blow, and if you do hit him, you may not

bring him down. The thing to do is to punch him in the stomach.

"When I was a young man practicing law in Tennessee," continued the President, "there was a big, bullying fellow that wanted to pick a quarrel with me, and so trod on my toes. Supposing it accidental, I said nothing. Soon after he did it again, and I began to suspect his object. In a few minutes he came by a third time, pushing against me violently, and evidently meaning *fight*. He was a man of immense size, one of the very biggest men I ever saw. As quick as a flash I snatched a small rail from the top of the fence, and gave him the point of it full in his stomach. Sir, it doubled him up. He fell at my feet and I stamped on him. Soon he got up *savage*, and was about to fly at me like a tiger. The bystanders made as though they would interfere. Says I, 'Gentlemen, stand back, give me room, that's all I ask and *I'll* manage him.' With that I stood ready with the rail pointed. He gave me *one* look, and turned away, a whipped man, sir, and feeling like one. So, sir, I say to you, if any villain assaults you, give him the p'int in his belly."

The son of that Colonel Avery with whom Jackson fought relates that on one occasion he, then a small boy, was at Jonesboro court when a dangerous fire broke out and the whole town was threatened with destruction. Jackson assumed command instinctively, and

most of the inhabitants obeyed, as instinctively. He had organized a bucket brigade passing buckets from a creek to the scene of the fire, when a drunken coppersmith began to give orders on his own account and to annoy people in the line.

"Fall into line!" roared Jackson.

But the man continued his interference, whereupon the self-made fire chief seized a bucket by the handle, swung it in a wide circle and brought it down with a crash upon the head of the obstreperous drunk. The coppersmith passed out and Jackson passed on. The town was saved.

Such incidents are the seed of gossip, and three or four of them are soon multiplied by the tongues of rumor into dozens and scores and hundreds. An enemy of Jackson, during one of the Presidential campaigns, compiled and published more or less circumstantial accounts of one hundred fights in which the General had participated. Most of the circumstances narrated are utterly false, but most of the incidents themselves had some basis of fact, enough to incite the gossips to send a tall tale throughout the land. Furthermore, disregarding the individual who got the p'int in his belly, the exhilarated coppersmith, and other affairs of the fist-and-skull method, it is undeniable that Jackson fought with lethal weapons Waightstill Avery, John Sevier, Charles Dickinson and the Benton brothers, Jesse and

Thomas. In only one of these affairs did Jackson kill his man, but in two of them he was severely wounded himself, and only the duel with Avery passed off without bloodshed on either side.

These four by themselves would have established his reputation as something of a fire-eater, even on the frontier. Add to them, not eight dozen, but a dozen such affairs as that of the Jonesboro fire and that of the "immense fellow" and the fence-rail, and it is no wonder that the District Attorney presently had the sort of reputation that a hundred years later and a thousand miles farther west was summed up in the appellation "bad man." Wild Bill Hickok in his palmiest days was given no wider berth by the pacifically inclined than was Andrew Jackson in Tennessee.

This is usually ascribed to an uncontrollable temper, and yet there are several witnesses who knew the man intimately and who have noted that Andrew Jackson knew when to explode and when to restrain himself. Several times in the course of his Indian campaigns things happened that might have driven Job into a passion without producing any sort of outburst from Jackson; and in every one of those cases it is perfectly clear that flying into a rage would have done not the slightest good, and might have ruined the whole campaign. On the other hand, on several occasions when he apparently blew up completely it is worthy of note

that terror inspired by the apparent insanity of the man's fury broke down the recalcitrant and brought order out of chaos. In other words, taking the record as a whole, it seems that this "ungovernable" temper of Andrew Jackson's worked to his advantage, rather than to his disadvantage. Occasionally it betrayed him into an uncomfortable position, but more frequently it blasted him out of one.

A number of his contemporaries gained the impression that he never got into a towering rage without working himself up to it, except when it was a question of some slighting remark regarding his wife. Then his wrath was indeed a thunderclap. It is said that when he quarrelled with Governor Sevier on the streets of Nashville, the dispute was proceeding with reasonable restraint up to the point at which Jackson referred to his services to the country, whereupon Sevier made the appalling rejoinder: "Services? I know of no great service you have rendered the country, except taking a trip to Natchez with another man's wife."

The shooting started so fast that the bystanders had no chance to clear the street, and one of them was grazed by a bullet, whether Sevier's or Jackson's is not known. But neither of the principals was hit before bystanders interfered. The revolver had not yet been invented; so the briskest gunman had ordinarily only two shots without pausing to reload, which doubtless accounts for

the fact that neither Jackson nor Sevier died on the street that day; for Jackson, at least, was unquestionably shooting to kill.

But in all other matters he never reached a really impressive tantrum instantly. Always there was a sufficient lapse of time to lend color to the theory that he deliberately lashed himself to fury. And this, coupled with the fact that the explosion, when it arrived, rarely produced a backfire and frequently produced the desired effect, shakes confidence in the theory that Andrew Jackson labored under the handicap of a temper absolutely beyond control. He controlled himself marvelously in other ways. In the most imminent peril of his life, not the flicker of an eyelash betrayed the strain. Time and again he took the field when he was broken by wounds and racked with disease. He fought the Creek campaign when he was not fit to sit in a saddle, and frequently could not. Several times he stared bankruptcy in the face and never quailed. And all accounts agree that in his home he was the gentlest and most considerate of men.

His explosions of wrath were a joint in his armor to the extent that they gave his enemies an excuse to rationalize their enmity. But joints, after all, are necessary. Jackson would have been attacked less vehemently had he been less violent, but would he have gone so far with a milder manner?

The question is at least debatable. Gentleness is not at a premium on the frontier. It is a hard life at best, and it requires hardness in the man who would live it. Furthermore, Jackson started that life under peculiarly difficult conditions. He was extremely young, and he was the prosecuting officer. He must have discovered early in his practice that the toughs brought into court were to be impressed by nothing short of violence; and he probably discovered later that a great many honest men react the same way.

It is certain, too, that at twenty-one he was supersensitive to ridicule. Jackson knew that he was young and poor and none too well versed in the law that he represented. Probably he labored under the common delusion that everyone else realized his disabilities as keenly as he did. At any rate, as young men frequently do, he was perpetually seeing slights and insults were none was intended. But he differed from most young men in having a tremendous courage, and with that endowment he did what nearly all youths wish to do—he defied the world. And the thing worked. He did have a temper. There is no gainsaying that. With that natural endowment, and with the steely courage to let his temper go, he was formidable. And when he became formidable, he was respected, at least to his face. What more natural, then, than that he should seize the weapon made to his hand, namely, his reputation for a

fiery and violent temper, and sharpen and strengthen it?

In other words, Jackson's famous temper was a beautiful illustration of the defense mechanism. He found an explosion of rage good protection against attack. Again the episode of the fight serves as an illustration of the way the thing worked. When the bully trod on his toes for the third time, Jackson spun round drove the end of the rail into his stomach without preliminary argumentation. The bully was a big man, but the fight was over before he realized that it had begun. That, however, was not an explosion of ungovernable temper. It was shrewd and precisely calculated strategy.

The sudden, terrific rages of Jackson were in many cases simply the point of the stick. Gouged by such a lightning-thrust, his opponent was frequently doubled up indeed, and too dazed to put up much of a fight thereafter.

In the course of the years the method presumably became automatic, and was employed long after its necessity had disappeared. But in the beginning, Jackson's rages undoubtedly covered his deficiencies, and covered them so well that he throve mightily and while he was still young became one of the chief men of Tennessee, partly bcause he was greatly admired, but largely because he was greatly feared.

CHAPTER VIII

How Mr. Jackson Made a Friend and Became, Among Other Things, a General.

IN 1795 a census revealed that Tennessee had more than the sixty thousand inhabitants requisite for statehood, and the Territorial Governor thereupon ordered five delegates from each of the eleven counties to convene at Knoxville to draft a Constitution. Andrew Jaskson was one of the five elected from Davidson, the county in which Nashville lay; and when the actual drafting of the document was entrusted to a committee made up of two delegates from each county, he and Judge McNairy were the two from Davidson. The work was finished early in 1796, and the draft submitted to Congress along with Tennessee's application for admission as the sixteenth State of the Union.

As District Attorney, Jackson was already well known, but this participation in the work of framing the organic law of the State established his position even more solidly. Although he was not yet thirty years old, he was one of the foremost men in the Territory, and he was in position to be considered when it should begin to distribute honors as a State.

Bu it was not yet a State, and there were vigorous efforts made in Congress to prevent its becoming one. In view of subsequent events, careful note should be taken of the fact that in the fight Tennessee had for one of her ablest champions Aaron Burr, of New York. No one in Tennessee soon forgot it, least of all Andrew Jackson, now become the most ardent of Tennesseeans.

In June, however, admission was granted, and Tennessee proceeded to select her State officials. For Governor she chose John Sevier, hero of thirty-five battles against the Indians and of another still more spectacular battle, that of the State of Franklin. Sevier had headed the government of Franklin and had been indicted for treason by North Carolina in consequence. But an Act of Oblivion had wiped that out and subsequently Sevier himself had taken a seat in the North Carolina legislature, representing the western counties. William Cooke and William Blount were the first United States Senators, and the first Representative—the State was entitled to one only—was Andrew Jackson. The electoral votes in the Presidential election were cast for Jefferson and Burr.

So Jackson was projected from the wilds of Tennessee upon the national scene in the rich and cultured city of Philadelphia. He came from a Jeffersonian State. He was a fervid Jeffersonian himself, and he arrived in the midst of a Federalist victory, if not a Fed-

eralist landslide. On the third day of the session President Washington made his farewell address to Congress and, as the custom then was, each house prepared a reply to be delivered in person. Immediately there was a split. The address was eulogistic, of course, and, as the committee presented it, it was too eulogistic to suit the Jeffersonians. It contained one reference that was particularly objectionable, and Edward Livingston moved to amend it by striking out the words "wise, firm and patriotic *administration*," substituting therefor "*Your* firmness, wisdom and patriotism."

Jackson, for one, might have conceded the patriotism of the Washington administration, but wise and firm he thought it was not. On the contrary, he was thoroughly convinced that, at least in its dealings with Tennessee, it had been unwise and irresolute. The various Indian wars had never been acknowledged by the Federal government, and their expenses were still unpaid. The Cherokees had not been suppressed by Philadelphia. On the contrary, after Jackson's departure from Nashville, Federal troops had actually been dispatched to protect their claims. Furthermore, the Federalists, who claimed to be Washington's spokesmen, had haggled over the admission of Tennessee into the Union. From the viewpoint of Tennessee, Washington was a very great man, to be sure, but a highly unsatisfactory President.

Therefore, the Tennessee Representative, with eleven others, voted for the Livingston resolution. In later years he was charged with having voted to censure George Washington. He did not. He had no chance to do so, for the Livingston resolution was not a vote of censure, but merely the refusal of a group of Jeffersonians to endorse a Federalist administration *in toto*. But it is entirely possible that if someone had proposed an actual vote of censure, Jackson's name might have been found among the *ayes*. It took more courage to oppose John Sevier in Tennessee than it took to oppose George Washington in Philadelphia, and Jackson did not hesitate to face Sevier. Washington was a Revolutionary hero, but so was Sevier; and for that matter Jackson also had been among those present. Why should he hesitate to vote his beliefs with regard to Washington's administration?

Considerations of political prudence might have restrained him had he had anything either to fear or to hope from the Philadelphia crowd, but Jackson was a rank outsider. He came from Tennessee, the wild and woolly State, and the affairs of the Republic were not run by gentlemen from Tennessee or any other of the young commonwealths beyond the mountains. National affairs were in the hands of gentlemen from Virginia and gentlemen from New England, with the important, but by no means preponderant, States of New

York and Pennsylvania throwing their weight first on one side, then on the other. Tennesseeans might make good Indian fighters, but to expect them to be considered seriously in the capital itself was really asking a little too much. No, Representative Jackson might be tolerated, he might even get through a bill compensating the militiamen who fought the Indians under Sevier in 1793, but no one could for a moment consider him as even potentially a member of the inner circle of government.

In 1797 a vacancy occurred in the Senate. The vote for the Livingston resolution had done him no harm at home, and the successful management of the militia pay bill had been tremendously popular. Tennessee approved of Representative Jackson, and transferred him to the Senate.

But if Jackson's record in the House was undistinguished, in the Senate it is non-existent. Parton was unable to discover his name listed once among the *ayes* and *nays*. Years after, Daniel Webster attributed to Jefferson, who presided over that Senate, the remark that Senator Jackson several times rose to address the Senate but on no occasion was he able to speak because each time rage choked him. That is extraordinary, not to say unbelievable, since on all other occasions Jackson's fluency increased with his wrath. But whether or not it accounts for his silence there is no reason to doubt that

his ire rose frequently during his service. The session of 1797 transacted almost no business, because everything hinged on the outcome of the negotiations with France, and as the Directory was by turns studiedly insolent and suavely evasive, if Senator Jackson did not choke with rage he must have been almost the only man in the United States who did escape that unhappy state. It must have been a harrowing experience for Jackson, for as a fighting man his every instinct urged war with France, while as a Tennesseean and a Jeffersonian his sympathies were all with the French republic.

Early in 1798 he put an end to it. He sent in his resignation and imagined that he had retired to private life.

But he came away from Philadelphia with one asset which was destined to prove of enormous value in other years. He had made the acquaintance of Edward Livingston, Representative from New York, and had laid the basis of a life-long friendship with him. Livingston and Clinton were the two names to conjure with in New York in those days. They were two powerful clans which divided the political control of the State for many years. Edward Livingston was a cadet of his house serving his apprenticeship to politics as a member of Congress. He was a scholarly youth, urbane, cultivated and somewhat fastidious. He bore many striking similarities to the young Roosevelt—he had the same

love of books, the same intellectual curiosity, the same taste for public affairs and the same background of wealth and family influence. He was in every respect diametrically opposite to Andrew Jackson except in two qualities—he was instinctively honest, and he had the steely courage essential to the maintenance of honesty.

Why the young frontiersman and the young aristocrat should have charmed each other is one of those mysteries of personality that scholarship has never penetrated. But so it happened, and when Jackson took the wilderness road that led back to Tennessee he carried with him an affection and an admiration for Edward Livingston that were destined to play a large part in both their lives.

The idea of retiring to private life, however, was Jackson's alone. Tennessee thought differently. Hardly had he arrived from Philadelphia when the legislature elected him to a seat on the Supreme Court bench, and in accordance with his theory that an American should never seek and never decline office, he took up his duties. What sort of judge he made we do not know, for there is no record of his decisions. The existing records begin with Judge Overton, his successor. But the chances are that he decided his cases in accordance with justice and without overmuch respect for precedent. The first reason for that assumption is the fact that he was none too well acquainted with the precedents; and

the second is the fact that his judgeship lasted for six years in a country which would have tolerated no judge whose decisions were not, in the main, in accord with justice as unlettered, but far from unintelligent, frontiersmen understood justice.

However, it would be preposterous to claim that he made a great judge, for it is doubtful that the bench was ever occupied anywhere by a man more completely devoid of judicial temperament than Andrew Jackson. Throughout the whole of his tenure of the office he carried on a desperate feud with the Governor of the State. This was the contest with John Sevier, already mentioned. It began when Jackson, on his way to Philadelphia the first time, heard reports concerning forged North Carolina land warrants which inspired him to write a letter to the Governor of that State. The letter precipitated a legislative investigation, the upshot of which was that practically all Tennessee land titles were temporarily shadowed, and many people, among them Sevier, felt that Jackson had acted as a meddling interloper.

The quarrel was embittered in 1801 after Sevier had ended his first term, when both men became candidates for the major-generalship of Tennessee militia, then vacant. The major-general was elected by the votes of the field officers, and the vote in this case resulted in a tie, which was broken by the new Governor, voting as

commander-in-chief. Governor Roane voted for Jackson. At the end of Roane's term Sevier ran for Governor again, and was elected over Jackson's opposition.

Both these campaigns were fought bitterly, and Tennessee is full of traditions of personal collisions between the two principals, none of which is well authenticated. It seems to be certain, however, that there was at least one street brawl, the occasion on which Sevier made his famous reference to the Natchez journey, and it resulted in a challenge. But for the Governor and the judge of the Supreme Court to fight on Tennessee soil was a little too much even for the frontier. Arrangements therefore were made for a meeting across the line in Kentucky. What happened at that meeting is not clear. Apparently Jackson was early on the ground while Sevier was accidentally detained; Jackson had given him up and was returning when they met on the road. One story says that as Sevier dismounted his horse bolted with his holsters. Parton thinks that Sevier stepped on his sword as he dismounted and fell under the horse. At any rate, there was no firing, and no one was hurt. Some sort of agreement was patched up, and the two never had another personal encounter.

But apparently Tennessee for once was a little shocked. Certainly Jackson took no great satisfaction in the business and neither did Sevier. Perhaps each was secretly a bit ashamed of himself, and apparently

it was borne in upon Jackson that the bench was no place for him. Besides, his financial affairs were getting into something approaching desperate shape. Once more he had taken a chance with the law and had been mistaken; and in consequence he was loaded with debt. Therefore he resigned his judgeship. His resignation was accepted July 24, 1804, and he really retired to private life, except for his office of major-general of the militia.

CHAPTER IX

How General Jackson Went Into Business and Acquired a Distaste for Banks.

DURING the years when Jackson was running the gamut of public titles from District Attorney through Representative, Senator, and Judge to Major-General, had a fair claim to two private titles, namely, Farmer and Merchant. His landed estate was enormous. Parton estimates that in 1798 he owned not less than fifty thousand acres; but his fortune loses some of his impressiveness when account is taken of the fact that he sold in that year a tract of six thousand acres for $6,676.

The bulk of Jackson's estate was, of course, wild land covered with virgin forest; but he had developed at a place called Hunter's Hill a really excellent plantation, which he left in the capable hands of Rachel while he went to Philadelphia, and again when he was riding the circuit as a judge. He suffered no loss by this, for his wife was as fine a manager as he, perhaps finer. She was as firm as Jackson himself, but infinitely more tactful. She was wonderfully adept at keeping hired men and slaves up to the mark without giving them the feel-

ing that they were being driven, and in her hands Hunter's Hill prospered exceedingly. The house itself was notable. It was a frame house in a country where the typical habitation was of logs, and that alone was enough to give it the reputation of almost regal magnificence.

But Jackson was a storekeeper as well as a farmer. It is uncertain when he first began to dabble in trade, but in all probability he made an occasional venture almost from the beginning of his residence in Tennessee. Indeed, it must have been inevitable, for he was practicing law in a country where fees were paid in every imaginable medium except money. Commerce by barter is characteristic of every frontier community, and when Tennessee was the frontier the United States itself had no reliable circulating medium. In its farthest outpost, therefore, money was practically non-existent. But if Lawyer Jackson's clients paid him in bear-skins, beeswax, land, pork, horses, cowbells and axes—all of which articles were currently used for the payment of all kinds of debts—Lawyer Jackson had to find some method of converting his accumulations into something better suited to his needs. He could not avoid becoming a merchant to some extent.

By 1798 he seems to have had a regular establishment, albeit a small one, for just before he resigned his seat in the Senate he bought a stock of goods which he sent by wagon to Pittsburgh, thence by flatboats down

Lawyer Jackson

the Ohio to Louisville, and thence across country to Nashville. He paid for the goods with the proceeds of the sale of the six thousand acres referred to above. But he had not received cash. The purchaser was one David Allison, then one of the greatest merchants in the United States, one whose credit was so well established that Jackson received his notes as currency and, indeed, with them was able to purchase the stock of goods referred to.

But when he returned to Tennessee he was immediately elected judge, and was unable to devote much attention to his mercantile establishment, which he left for the most part in the hands of one John Hutchings, a relative of Mrs. Jackson. Then came the financial panic of 1798. David Allison was caught and his great house went down in bankruptcy, leaving Jackson with $6,676 of worthless paper not on his hands, indeed, but bearing his indorsement and in the hands of the wholesalers who had supplied his stock. The worst of it was that these notes had not merely to be paid, but to be paid in money at Philadelphia.

It was the severest test to which Jackson had yet been put as a man of affairs. It was a test so severe, indeed, that it is almost impossible to gauge its severity in this day of facile exchange, but it is safe to say that it tested to the utmost all his resources of alertness, persuasiveness, promptness and energy. His exertions must have

been tremendous to be so successful, for as each successive note fell due—there were three of them—it was met, principal and interest, in current funds at Philadelphia. This transaction probably covered three years, possibly five, and when it was closed Jackson's credit was indeed established with the Philadelphia merchants, but his estate was badly impaired and involved in a complicated system of mortgages and other debts. Throughout the whole of his six years on the bench he was harassed and anxious. Possibly this anxiety contributed something to the irascibility which he displayed toward Governor Sevier, for a man who is hard-pressed financially is not commonly sweet-tempered. Be that as it may, his financial worries certainly hastened his decision to retire from the bench, for a reorganization of his affairs was imperative.

But the Allison deal had another effect—it confirmed, if it did not establish, Jackson's suspicion of evidences of indebtedness. He was not in the remotest degree responsible for the failure of the house of Allison, but, because a mercantile establishment in Philadelphia blew up, he found himself deprived of six thousand acres of land and almost deprived of the rest of his estate, as well. This one encounter with the credit system as it then existed had cost him a large share of his fortune, years of anxiety and the most tremendous financial struggle he had ever undergone, although it involved not the slight-

est fault on his part. He was a burnt child indeed and thenceforth he regarded the fire with a holy horror.

Now that he understood the complication of evils that may follow a transaction in commercial paper, he was more than ever ill at ease over his own outstanding notes. Rid of his judgeship, he came home and inaugurated a drastic program of deflation. The magnificence of the frame house at Hunter's Hill was condemned. It went on the block, along with the finest of his improved land. He sold no less than twenty-five thousand acres of his wild lands in other parts of the State. He went back to live in a log house on the plantation later known as the Hermitage. But he paid every debt. Presently there was not one bit of commercial paper bearing the name of Andrew Jackson left outstanding.

Then he went into the mercantile business on a larger scale, associating with himself John Coffee under the firm name of Jackson, Coffee & Hutchings. The firm dealt in everything the country produced. It imported goods from Philadelphia, exchanged them for local products, shipped these down the river to New Orleans and sold them there for bills of exchange on Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York.

At the same time he set himself to more intensive cultivation of his farm lands and soon became known as one of the best farmers in the region. He was proud, and with reason, of his crops of wheat, corn and cotton,

proud of his cattle and mules, and intensely proud of his horses. On his place he had a cotton gin, one of the few in the county. It was the mark of an extremely progressive planter, for Eli Whitney had made his invention only a decade earlier. The Hermitage, like Hunter's Hill, prospered exceedingly.

The mercantile business was less satisfactory. The distances over which it operated were appalling, and communications were slow and uncertain. Philadelphia was two months away, New Orleans a month. There was no quick and reliable means of discovering the state of the market at either place. Unless one kept a buyer there at all times, fluctuations in prices on the Philadelphia market were as likely to be ruinous as beneficial. Prices of goods might be driven so high overnight that, with the tremendous cost of transportation to Nashville added, they could not be sold at a profit in Tennessee. In New Orleans, on the other hand, the arrival of the number of consignments of a particular article would glut the market, and the last-comer might not be able to sell his produce for enough to pay its transportation costs down the river.

And at both ends of the line, the Tennessee merchant was at the mercy of bill-brokers. Let the merchant be ever so careful, industrious and intelligent and let every other bit of luck be in his favor, yet if the exchange went against him he saw his profits vanish.

Again and again this happened to Jackson, Coffee & Hutchings. As the years passed the senior partner in the firm was more and more deeply impressed with the absolutism exercised over commerce on the frontier by the financial power in the cities of the East. He realized ere long that only by grace of the bankers could a firm exist and continue in business, and to a man of Jackson's temperament it was wormwood and gall to have to acknowledge the overlordship of distant bankers. He became imbued with the doctrine that was still orthodoxy in the West a hundred years later when William Jennings Bryan raised the standard of revolt and marched upon the citadels of the money power, namely, that the banker is vastly over-paid for his services in expediting commerce, and that for bankers in Philadelphia and New York to have power of life and death over business enterprises in Tennessee is criminal injustice.

About this time another incident occurred to remind Jackson that he who ventures among the dealers in evidences of indebtedness, the merchants of paper, is taking desperate chances. This was another appalling reminder of the Allison bankruptcy. One of Allison's creditors in Pennsylvania held, as security for a loan, a mortgage on eighty-five thousand acres of land in Tennessee, and after the failure Jackson was employed to foreclose. At the moment he had just accepted his commission as judge and was therefore debarred from practice; so he turned

the case over to his friend Overton, agreeing to split the fee of ten thousand acres of the land. Overton accordingly brought suit in the Federal court, the mortgage was foreclosed, and Jackson duly received title to five thousand acres. Later he disposed of this in small lots, giving warranty deeds which, under the law of Tennessee, obligated him to recompense the holder, not merely for the purchase price, but for the current value of the land if the title proved defective.

Years later, after the land had been cleared and brought under cultivation—thereby increasing its value enormously—an inquisitive lawyer interested in the affairs of the defunct house of Allison, discovered that since *both* debtor and creditor in the case were citizens of the same State, namely, Pennsylvania, the Federal court had no jurisdiction in the matter, the foreclosure was worthless and the land belonged to the Allison heirs. And Jackson had warranted every title to five thousand acres of it.

To make good these titles would have wiped him out. Once more he stood in an appalling position through a blunder that a better-trained lawyer would never have made, although in this case Overton was as much at fault as Jackson.

However, although Jackson may have been a bad lawyer, he was anything but a fool. When the first intimation of trouble came to him he took the course of a

sensible man, and went instantly to a good lawyer. Acting on competent legal advice, he collected the old notes Allison had given which, with interest, now amounted to about $14,000, mounted his horse and rode post-haste four hundred miles through the wilderness into Georgia, where the Allison heirs were living. He presented his claim to offset theirs, and by payment of a comparatively small sum secured a clear title and was back in Tennessee before many of the people who held his warranted deeds were aware that any trouble had existed. At that, however, the unraveling of the legal snarl was a long, complicated and vexatious business, involving a lawsuit of twelve years' duration.

Thus Jackson's business experience all tended to demonstrate two things, first, that as long as he restricted himself to producing, he prospered. His crops were usually good. His cattle were excellent. His horses were the pride of a country that was notable for its fine horses. Honest dealing, intelligent supervision and hard work on his farm yielded rich returns.

That was one thing he learned as a business man. The other was that when he turned from production to distribution everything seemed to go wrong. He dealt as honestly in his store as he did on his farm. He planned and supervised with as great care. He worked as hard. But somehow the profits continually eluded him, and he was not long in making up his mind as to the cause. On

the farm he could defend his property against marauders, but in commerce he was at the mercy of the merchants of paper. The fairest dealing, the most intelligent supervision, the hardest work in the store might go for nothing if some banker in far-away Philadelphia or New Orleans once began to squeeze him. He conceived a deadly fear and a bitter hatred of the power that could throttle an honest man's business despite the man's best efforts.

After some years of fruitless struggling Jackson sold out his part of the business to Coffee. Tradition says that the latter proceeded from bad to worse, lost everything he had in the world, went through bankruptcy and returned to his former vocation of surveyor. Some years later he married Mrs. Jackson's niece and the story goes that on the wedding day Jackson produced the notes Coffee had given him when he bought the business, tore them across and presented the fragments to the bride. It is not improbable, for throughout his life his generosity to his wife's countless relations was one of his most conspicuous characteristics.

At any rate, during the eight years between 1804 and 1812, Jackson dabbled in commerce without much success, got out of it and concentrated his attention on development of his plantation, in which he was conspicuously successful. His affairs were reorganized and put upon a solid basis. He owed no man, and while his fortune

was not great it was substantial and conspicuously solid. In addition, his experience had implanted in him a profound suspicion of the credit system, and a virulent hatred of the power of the financiers in the Eastern cities. —a hatred destined to have a profound influence not only on his own career, but on the history of the United States as well.

But in the meantime he had taken part in two notorious affairs. He had come into contact with a small man and with a great one, and had suffered damage in each collision. He had dealt with Charles Dickinson and with Aaron Burr, and thereby had provided material for controversies that still go on and that probably will continue as long as the fame of Andrew Jackson lasts.

CHAPTER X

How General Jackson Did a Deed That Shocked His Friends but Also Appalled His Enemies.

TO call Jackson a typical frontiersman is to describe him only to those who know the frontier, its vices as well as its virtues. We have made a cult of the frontier in America and developed stereotypes which stand for its various phases as it swept across the continent. Each period has its popular embodiment, and the marching frontier is for us a procession of glamorous names, Captain John Smith and Captain Miles Standish, the Deerslayer, Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, Kit Carson, Jesse James, Buffalo Bill, the Virginian and even up to frontiersmen of today. But many of these are the creations of writing men interested primarily in telling a good story. Even when they were once historical personages, as, for instance, in the case of Jesse James, they live now only in the tales that are woven about them, and the art of a teller of tales is highly selective. His effect depends as much upon what he leaves out as upon what he puts in.

The consequence is that when we encounter some real-

istic detail of frontier life it is apt to be one of those things which writers of fiction have left out, because they know their business; and it seems to us unpleasant and untrue. We accept readily enough the dictum that "a man may smile and smile and still be a villain" because that is part of the accepted stereotype; but that a man may do low, vicious, disreputable things and still be a great man is not part of the stereotype, and therefore is highly objectionable. But, unless he is very young, every candid man must admit that it is true, for he must have seen something like it in real life.

To admit that Andrew Jackson occasionally showed up howling drunk in Nashville and urged on his birds at a cock-fight with a blasphemy which owed part of its lurid picturesqueness to alcoholic inspiration is somehow regarded as an attempt to deny that he was a hero. To mention his delight in horse-racing and the enthusiasm with which he backed his own entries with his money is regarded as an attempt to belittle him. Dealers in "inspirational" literature are so cynically sure of the innate rascality of all of us that they regard as inadmissible any discussion of an eminent man's vices. Once admit that a notable got drunk, or fought chickens, or bet on horse-races and these despisers of the human race assume that such activities are all the world will find worthy of emulation.

True, it was not his vices that made Andrew Jackson

the idol of his country, but they did affect his career so frequently and so profoundly that to omit all mention of them leaves him altogether unintelligible. The train of events that led up to the death of Charles Dickinson, for example, began with the side bet on a horse-race—that is, the events that were ostensibly the cause of the man's death. The real cause was the code of honor that was accepted on the frontier.

Dickinson was certainly not the thorough-going villain that the friends of Jackson painted for exhibition to the public in later years. On the other hand, he was no Galahad. He seems to have been a gay young blade not over-burdened with brains. He was reputed to be the best pistol-shot in Tennessee, and there is no such reason to doubt his physical courage as there is to suspect his judgment.

Parton is of the opinion that Dickinson was, when sober, rather amiable than otherwise. At any rate, he was popular in Nashville. He had married the daughter of an eminent citizen, apparently was successful in his law-practice, and in general bore as little resemblance as any man to "the furious Tybalt." But he would talk too much, especially when drunk. It came to General Jackson's ears that Dickinson, in the presence of his boon companions in a tavern, had made disparaging remarks about Mrs. Jackson. He demanded explanations, but if Dickinson sought a quarrel he evidently did

not choose to fight upon any such grounds, for he promptly declared that if he had made the remarks attributed to him he must have been drunk and he repudiated and apologized for them. With that the incident seemed to be closed.

But presently the offense was repeated, and this time Jackson went to Captain Joseph Ervin, the young man's father-in-law, suggesting that he use his influence and intimating that he believed Dickinson was being used by others to force a quarrel. Once more, the incident seemed to be closed, but the suspicion in Jackson's mind broadened and deepened. After all, Dickinson was the best pistol-shot in Tennessee and a wild, reckless fellow. Jackson continued to believe that a fight was to be forced upon him.

Once this conviction was fixed in his mind he was temperamentally capable of but one thing, namely, to force the fighting. Occasion arose in the spring of 1806, owing to an incident that had occurred the previous autumn. Jackson had imported from Virginia a thoroughbred racehorse, which he named after the commander of the famous *Constellation*, who had thrilled the country in 1799 and 1800 by his victories over the French ships, *L'Insurgente* and *La Vengeance*, during our informal naval war with France. This horse, Truxton, had won several notable races and in the fall of 1805 it was arranged to match him against another fa-

vorite, Captain Joseph Ervin's Plow Boy. The stakes were $2,000 payable in notes due on demand, and the forfeit $800. But before the race came off Captain Ervin and his son-in-law, Dickinson, decided to withdraw Plow Boy. This was done and the forfeit paid.

But a few months later one Thomas Swann, a very young lawyer newly come from Virginia, picked up a rumor that there was something irregular about the payment of the forfeit, the notes offered not being those which were promised, and mentioned it to Dickinson as coming from Jackson. Dickinson demanded an explanation from Jackson and got it in the form of a statement that whoever originated the report was a damned liar, and when Swann was named as the authority Jackson demanded that Swann, who was in the same house, be produced. This demand Dickinson refused, but he reported the General's contemptuous remark to Swann, and the young Virginian wrote Jackson an exceedingly tart epistle.

The letter excited all the wrath the youth could have desired, but to Mr. Swann's evident disappointment the General was enraged not at him, but at Dickinson whom Jackson regarded as the instigator of the affair. He therefore wrote Swann a letter in which Dickinson was referred to as a "base poltroon and cowardly tale-bearer" and which included a request that it be shown to Dickinson. Mr. Swann promptly challenged General Jack-

son, and the General as promptly caned Mr. Swann in the public room of Winn's tavern.

In the meantime, Charles Dickinson, on the eve of a flatboat trip to New Orleans, had written Jackson in such terms as he supposed would produce a challenge; and according to tradition, spent the time on his journey to New Orleans perfecting himself in pistol practice.

While he was away a tremendous newspaper war took place. Swann wrote and had published in the *Impartial Review and Cumberland Repository*, the local newspaper, an account of the difficulty. Jackson replied at great length and with sarcastic references to Dickinson and to Nathaniel McNairy, friend of Swann and Dickinson, quoting John Coffee as to McNairy's proclivities. McNairy gave Coffee the lie in print, was called out by Coffee and shot him in the thigh before the seconds gave the word. Thereupon the seconds flew into print publishing McNairy's disgrace. Editor Eastin, of the *Impartial Review*, saw his thitherto blameless sheet become the cue for shooting to start every time it appeared. He was another of Mrs. Jackson's countless relatives, but he was a prudent man and lived up to the name of his paper. He published everything that was submitted by either side. He might be the proximate cause of many shootings, but he had no intention of becoming a target.

About May 20 Charles Dickinson returned from New Orleans to find the town in a fever of excitement, Cof-

fee in bed with a hole in his leg, McNairy branded as an unfair duellist and Swann driven frantic with rage and mortification. Dickinson immediately wrote for the paper a furious denunciation of Jackson, couched in the most opprobrious terms he could think of. Before it was published General Thomas Overton heard of it and told Jackson, who went to Eastin and demanded a look at it. An hour later Overton placed Jackson's challenge in Dickinson's hands.

The meeting was arranged to take place across the border in Kentucky on Friday, May 30, 1806. The place was a long day's ride from Nashville and both parties set out Thursday morning. It is said that Dickinson's party was gay and confident; it is certain that Jackson's was grave. Jackson had not a doubt that he would be hit, and he discussed with General Overton, his second, the best procedure under the circumstances. The agreement was that after the word "Fire!" each of the antagonists might shoot as quickly or as slowly as he chose. Since Dickinson was known to be a crack shot the two agreed that it was useless for Jackson to try to cripple him before he could fire. So he went to the field with the extraordinary resolve to permit the best pistol-shot in Tennessee to shoot him, and then try to bring his antagonist down before he fell himself.

"I should have hit him if he had shot me through the brain," he said years later.

This desperate resolution is the best testimony to the utter ferocity of the affair. Most duels of the day were somewhat careless. There was much shooting at legs and some firing into the air. The ordinary duellist was only less relieved at missing his antagonist than he was at being missed, and when a fighter did wing his man he usually prayed fervently for the victim's recovery.

But that was not the spirit of this meeting. Each man went out to kill. Dickinson proposed to shoot Jackson through the heart before he had time to fire; and had confidence in his ability to do it. Jackson also had confidence in his antagonist's marksmanship, but he had also a frightful confidence in the strength of his own hatred to prop him up long enough to put a bullet through Dickinson, and that was all he cared for.

It is preposterous to assume that such venomous hatred arose from a misunderstanding about a horse-race, or from the tale-bearing proclivities of Mr. Swann. These were but a convenient pretext for killing Dickinson. The real offense lay deeper. The real offense originated when liquor loosened Dickinson's tongue and he befouled Rachel's name, and it was exacerbated by Jackson's profound conviction that this man was the instrumentality chosen by his enemies to destroy him. Well, they had him in a corner now. Dickinson would probably achieve his purpose; but Jackson was grimly resolved that this man's lips should never utter vile hints about any other

woman, nor should his pistol bring down another honest man.

In a poplar grove by the banks of a little stream they drove down two pegs, twenty-four feet apart. Jackson stood by one, Dickinson by the other, their pistols pointing down until the word should be given. Jackson's gaunt form was draped in a loosely-fitting frock coat, carelessly buttoned over his chest, thereby disguising the extreme thinness of his body. Overton gave the word.

Instantly Dickinson whipped up his pistol and fired. Overton, watching Jackson, saw a puff of dust fly from the breast of his coat and his left arm came up and was pressed against his chest. But he did not waver, and his pistol rose remorselessly to the level.

"Great God! Have I missed him?" exclaimed Dickinson, involuntarily recoiling from his peg.

"Back to the mark, sir!" thundered Overton, his pistol in his hand.

Dickinson stepped up to the peg and stood with his eyes averted. Jackson pulled the trigger, but there was no report. His pistol had stopped at half-cock.

He lowered it, re-cocked it, deliberately took aim again and fired. Dickinson reeled, then as his friends rushed to him collapsed in their arms. Overton went forward to examine into his condition, but a glance told the story. The wounded man's trousers were already

reddened, and when his clothing was loosened a stream of blood poured from his side. He was shot through the body under the ribs.

Overton walked back to where his own man stood and said,

"He won't want anything more of you, General."

With Jackson's surgeon they walked away and had gone a hundred yards before Overton noticed that one of Jackson's shoes was filled with blood. Horrified, he remembered the puff of dust.

"Oh, I believe he has pinked me a little," said Jackson in response to his exclamation.

The surgeon's hasty examination revealed that Dickinson's confidence in his marksmanship had been justified. He had sent his ball precisely where he had intended to send it, but, unfortunately for him, Jackson's heart was not there. He was thinner than Dickinson had believed, and the loose coat had deceived the crack shot into shooting an inch too far to the left so that his bullet had only broken a rib or two and raked the breastbone. It was an ugly and painful wound, but not a fatal one, and Jackson was able to return to the tavern where he had spent the night without too much discomfort. Dickinson never knew he was touched.

That unfortunate man lingered all day and until nine o'clock at night in horrible agony, then died, as Parton

says, "cursing with his last breath the ball that had entered his body."

Nashville, accustomed as it was to bloody feuds, was appalled by this ghastly affair. Jackson's enemies, who were not a few, raved and even his friends were put upon the defensive. Editor Eastin received a demand that he put the next issue of the *Impartial Review* in mourning as a tribute of respect to Dickinson, and the demand was signed by seventy-three citizens, many of them of high standing. Jackson heard of it, and demanded that Eastin publish the names. The ingenious editor accommodated both parties by turning his column rules *and* printing the names.

It is significant, however, that when what he intended to do was noised about, no less than twenty-six of the original signers called at the newspaper office and erased their names. It was a horrible affair, without doubt, but Dickinson was dead and Jackson was very much alive; and prudent citizens, despite their indignation, had no appetite for a quarrel with the man who had killed the best pistol shot in Tennessee.

Jackson was under a cloud. His friends stuck to him with magnificent loyalty, but men who knew him by reputation only were genuinely shocked by the duel, and the General's popularity in his own State sank to the lowest ebb it ever touched. He was thenceforth definitely a man of blood.

But any realistic estimate of the outcome of the affair must consider the significance of the act of the twenty-six prudent men who erased their names when they realized that Jackson would know who was condemning him. Jackson's idea that Dickinson was the instrument of a conspiracy to murder him may have been altogether foolish, but unquestionably there were those in Nashville who relied on Dickinson's pistol to rid them of a man they feared and hated. If they actually had conspired to get rid of Jackson, they could not have chosen a better *bravo*, and when it was rumored that the men were to fight, all the enemies of Jackson must have rubbed their hands, at least figuratively. Then it was the expert with the pistol who died, and Jackson who came back, more terrible than ever. If he could kill Dickinson, who could stand against him?

More than that, if there had been any who were tempted to strike at Jackson through his wife, the temptation assailed them no longer, now that the last man who had tried it was in his shroud. Virtue is a woman's best protection, no doubt, but a husband with an unerring pistol and an undeniable enthusiasm for using it upon his wife's traducers also is a potent argument against loose talk.

This seems, in fact, to be one of those stories in real life with the failing all too common among such stories that the moral to be drawn from it is highly

immoral. Charles Dickinson had done nothing worthy of death except make a sincere and hearty effort to kill Andrew Jackson; yet by killing him Jackson gained some execration, to be sure, but also the unwilling respect of his enemies and a sudden and complete cessation of the taunts about his marriage.

But in the meantime he had come into contact with Aaron Burr, and that was another story.

CHAPTER XI

How General Jackson Made His Debut on the National Stage with No Great Applause.

IT would be incorrect to say that the death of Charles Dickinson marks a turning-point in the life of Andrew Jackson, because there were no turning-points in that life. It is what the school-books of twenty years ago termed a "right line." From beginning to end it holds its direction steadily. The penniless immigrant's son started life as a nobody determined to become Somebody, and from that ideal he never swerved but through or over every obstacle in his path he pursued his aim until he had become the most considerable Somebody in the western hemisphere, and was regarded as a person of importance by the King of England, the King of France and the King of Spain.

But the death of Dickinson is a convenient marker on that straight line. It indicates the time when Jackson first rose above the national horizon. He had served in Congress, it is true, but to the States other than Tennessee he was just another Senator, to be distinguished with difficulty from his predecessor and his successors.

Within a year after the duel, however, he had begun to assume individuality, not merely in the minds of Tennesseeans, but in the minds of the whole people, and especially in the minds of the urbane and astute gentlemen who, in the name of democracy, had set up a beautiful and highly competent little oligarchy in Washington.

Jackson's initial appearance on the national stage was somewhat dubious, because he was revealed to the audience by the light of a baleful star. He appeared in the entourage of Aaron Burr at the moment when the government was making a prodigious effort to send Burr to prison if not to the gallows. Jackson was summoned to testify for the government but before he went on the stand government counsel discovered that they had made the mistake of Balak, king of Moab, who summoned Balaam to curse Israel and suffered a terrific back-fire in consequence. As Jackson by the time of the trial had become a roaring partisan of Burr, his name was stricken off the list of witnesses and he never testified.

The enigmatic, fascinating figure of Burr appeared in Tennessee for the third time when Jackson had hardly recovered from the wound which he had received from Dickinson. What Burr was doing there never was quite clear to anyone, possibly never quite clear to himself. But it is quite clear that he dazzled Tennessee. Indeed,

it would have been remarkable had he failed to do so, for Burr, "the beautiful and damned," could dazzle any society when he chose.

True, he was to some extent under a cloud in the East, for only two years before he had killed Alexander Hamilton. But Tennessee objected to that only on the score of technique. Tennessee would have preferred to see Hamilton hanged. The fact that Colonel Burr shot him, however, was certainly nothing for a good Tennesseean to hold against Colonel Burr, the man who had befriended Tennessee when she needed friends to win her statehood over the opposition of the Federalists. Furthermore, he talked magnificently of schemes which warmed the hearts of all the patriots, for he referred to splendid plans of colonization. His conversation was full of references to thousands of settlers pouring into the Mississippi Valley, of the extension of frontiers, the conquest of more of the wilderness—and there were hints of conquest of something other than wilderness.

The Spanish power still loomed in the imaginations of the people of the West. True, Napoleon had broken its grip upon the mouth of the Mississippi and had in turn been brought off by Jefferson, so that the great river was now an open gateway from the Valley States to the marts of the world. Nevertheless, New Orleans was held precariously. It was a salient, thrust into the Spanish front, with Florida on the east and Mexico, which of

course included Texas, on the west. The frontier States were perpetually nervous about New Orleans, for if that salient were nipped off they would be effectually bottled up. Not dreaming that within a few years railroads were to eliminate the trade barrier erected by the Appalachian mountains, statesmen of 1806 accepted it as axiomatic that New Orleans must forever remain the great outlet for all the products of the Mississippi Valley. The value of the Louisiana Purchase, therefore, and indeed of the territory between the river and the mountains of the East depended absolutely upon holding New Orleans. And New Orleans had Spaniards to the right of her and Spaniards to the left of her, while in front lay the sea, whereon the Spaniards were still reckoned powerful. It was a perilous situation, and the West could not believe it right to leave its supremely important city so exposed.

Therefore when it began to be whispered about that what Colonel Burr really had in mind was a descent upon Mexico to sweep the Spaniards out, the West was in no wise shocked. Spain was at the moment a friendly power, certainly, but in 1806 that meant no more than it meant a hundred and eight years later, when the nations practically unanimously decided that no nation is really friendly if it appears to have your throat in an economic noose. Spain had but to move in from two sides and the West would be throttled; so in 1806 the

West envisaged war with Spain with the same fatalistic certainty with which Frenchmen and Germans envisaged war in 1906. It was not exactly desired, but it was regarded as one of those things which are bound to come and debate turned upon choosing the best time to strike.

So when Aaron Burr arrived at the Hermitage in 1805 he was received as an honored guest and provided with a boat for his contemplated trip to New Orleans. Again when he returned in August, he was received in the same manner, although by this time it had begun to be suspected that he had unfriendly designs upon Spanish territory.

He did not return for more than a year, and in the meantime other, and darker, rumors concerning his project had begun to float about. Strange things were happening in the world. An artilleryman had first rescued, then hypnotized France, and had transformed himself from the obscurest of the obscure into a king of kings. Bonaparte bestrode the world and the blaze of his career had fascinated better men than Aaron Burr. The fright that Bolshevism gave the world a century later was but a mild reflection of the panic that Bonapartism inspired. Soon it began to be said that Aaron Burr really aspired to be a tin-pot Napoleon—that the Spanish filibuster was to be his Campaign of Italy, and that when he had thrown the Dons into the Caribbean,

he would seize the Mississippi Valley and set up his throne in New Orleans.

If these rumors had reached Nashville at all they had not moved Jackson when Burr appeared in September, for the adventurer was received with all courtesy, and was given every assistance possible. The firm of Jackson and Coffee took the contract for building Burr's flatboats, and a nephew of Mrs. Jackson joined the expedition.

But about the 10th of November a friend came to Jackson and for the moment convinced him that some villainy was afoot. Jackson's movements were characteristic. Being an honest man, he informed Coffee that the contracts the firm had made must be carried out to the letter, but that no new contracts should be made untill the matter was cleared up; and he wrote to Burr acquainting him with what he had heard and demanding an explanation. Being a patriot, and a highly romantic one, he wrote to Claiborne, Governor of Louisiana, a mysterious but terrible letter in which he named no names but intimated that all the horrors of hell were about to be unleashed upon New Orleans from a totally unexpected quarter; which must have given that good gentleman some sleepless nights and dark suspicions of all his personal attendants. And, being a soldier, or at any rate a major-general, he wrote to the President proferring his services and that of the Tennessee brigade

of militia. Finally, being no fool, he mentioned the matter to no one except intimate friends in whose discretion he had confidence.

In the meantime a district attorney had started proceedings in Kentucky against Burr. The first motion was denied by the court, but when Burr heard of it he demanded a grand jury investigation, retaining Henry Clay to act for him. A grand jury was accordingly convened, but as no evidence against Colonel Burr was forthcoming, it reported in his favor. Then, on December 14th, Burr reappeared at the Hermitage. Jackson was away, but Rachel was markedly cool in her treatment of the visitor—so much so that he mentioned the matter to Coffee, who explained. Whereupon Burr made an appointment with Jackson at the tavern and in a personal interview repelled every suggestion that his objects were inimical to the United States. He completely converted Jackson, who thereafter always believed in his innocence.

So Burr proceeded down the river and within a few days after his departure came a thundering proclamation by the President of the United States averring that a plot against the territories of Spain, a friendly nation, was hatching in the West and ordering all officers of the government and all good citizens to aid in putting it down. Jackson, appalled, sent a courier riding desperately to Captain Bissell, commanding Fort Massac on

the Ohio, ordering him to halt any armed flotilla which might attempt to pass down the river. That astonished officer reported that he would do so, but that he did not believe that any armada was assembling in his neighborhood; for the last two weeks the largest party which had passed his post was that of Colonel Burr, late Vice-President of the United States, who had with him only ten flatboats and about sixty men, but no munitions of war and no troops.

But in the meantime Jackson had ordered out the militia and excitement had reached fever-heat in Nashville. Burr was burnt in effigy in the public square, one of the participants on that occasion being Mr. Thomas Swann, from which it is easy to judge that it was a field-day for Jackson's enemies. The arrival of Bissell's reply, however, dissipated the excitement, and Nashville paid no great attention to the affair thereafter.

It was not over, however. There were numerous gentlemen in Washington with no objection to "getting" Aaron Burr. Not only had he incurred the everlasting enmity of the Federalists by killing their leader, Hamilton, but he had been eminently successful in New York politics and therefore had plenty of enemies in his own party. In 1801 there had been a desperate effort by certain Federalists to cheat Jefferson out of the election by naming Burr, although he had obviously been chosen Vice-President, and ever since Jefferson

had regarded Burr with marked lack of enthusiasm. In the President's opinion the late Vice-President was capable of a good deal of devilment. The story that he intended to disrupt the union and make himself emperor of a western empire therefore struck President Jefferson as entirely credible. Burr was arrested and tried for high treason.

But after the man had been taken into custody the government found that it is much easier to arrest than to convict. The government's documentary evidence was not impressive and its array of witnesses even less so. One of the principal ones was an army sergeant at that moment under charges of desertion. The best of the lot was James Wilkinson, commanding general at New Orleans, who had himself been in the conspiracy, if there was one, right up to the neck, although, as he said, merely to collect evidence for the government. Thus Wilkinson appeared to the court at best as an *agent provocateur* while many people, Andrew Jackson among them, regarded him as a plain turncoat trying to convict Burr in order to cover up his own misdeeds.

In this need of witnesses it occurred to someone on the government side to summon General Jackson. He had been a Senator and a Judge and he paid his debts. His reputation for veracity was unspotted. Although he had at this time not much more than State-wide renown, by comparison with most of the government's

witnesses he seemed to be a tremendously eminent man.

But they had summoned Andrew Jackson before they had studied him. He was now thirty-nine years old, and while his career may be no more than begun, by the time a man is thirty-nine his character is pretty well fixed. If someone in the confidence of officialdom had known Jackson, he might have predicted exactly what Jackson would do. He had had personal and business dealings with Burr. He had heard the rumors about Burr, had investigated them, and then had continued to deal with the man. Anyone who knew Andrew Jackson intimately would have realized that this indicated that Jackson was convinced of Burr's innocence. And when Jackson believed in a man he believed in him up and down, through and through, and around and around.

Nevertheless, Jackson was ordered to Richmond to testify. When he arrived there, he began to understand more clearly the nature of the array against Burr. Here was General Wilkinson, whom Jackson already regarded as a turncoat and probably a traitor, certainly as bad as Burr and probably worse—Wilkinson corroborated by a deserter. Furthermore, the man from Tennessee began to understand that it would be highly convenient to people of influence in Washington for Burr to be convicted. President Jefferson could dispense with so erratic and unreliable a party leader as Burr. Secretary

of State Madison wished to have no more filibustering expeditions to explain. He had had trouble enough with Miranda. Since the Federalists could not hang Burr for killing Hamilton, they had no objection to hanging him for treason.

It is quite conceivable that in the main they were right. Burr was, to put it mildly, a highly unstable compound—able, energetic, ambitious, none too scrupulous and decidedly indiscreet, in short, a particularly dangerous leader. But what they were trying to do at Richmond was to convict him of the ancient treason of "imagining the king's death." He may have imagined an empire of Aaron I., carved, in part, out of the territory of the United States of America; but up to the time of his arrest he had committed no overt act against the government of the United States, nor any indeed against the government of Spain. Now this custom of punishing men for the imaginations of their hearts was one against which the founding fathers of the republic were particularly hot, and they had inserted in the organic law half a dozen provisions against it. Nevertheless, the forces against Burr at Richmond made a desperate effort to convict him in the face of these provisions. A century later the affair would have been described as an attempt to "railroad" Burr to prison, if not to the gallows.

It sickened Jackson. It made him completely and vio-

lently sick, and he did not fail to tell the world what ailed him. While waiting to be called to the stand—a long wait, for the process of the trial was inordinately slow—he went into the streets and public places of Richmond and began to make orations to the crowd proclaiming Burr's innocence. And this was the most respectable of the government's witnesses!

No wonder government counsel struck his name off their list and sent him home without a chance to make one of his orations on the witness stand. No wonder Secretary of State Madison made a mental note to let this man alone. It was immediately apparent to all official Washington that Major-General Andrew Jackson of Tennessee was not to be counted as a reliable machine man. If there had been any disposition to incorporate him in the inner circle this would have finished it. Jackson was obviously of the insurgent type. He might have his uses on the outside, but as a member of the ruling group he wouldn't do.

So Jackson first emerged upon the national stage in the dubious company of Aaron Burr and gained, if not the active hostility, at least the profound distrust of "the great little Madison" and of all those who stood closest to the sources of power in Washington.

Jefferson regarded him reflectively. A thorough-going Jeffersonian, this, and clearly a remarkable man, but rough, exceedingly rough. He was long and loose and

almost red-headed, but Jefferson had keen eyes. It is possible that he saw in the rangy frontiersman more than a passing resemblance to that short, swart Corsican who was the terror of the world. At any rate, Mr. Jefferson exhibited no unbounded enthusiasm for General Jackson. The latter made his first exit without marked applause.

CHAPTER XII

How General Jackson Went to War so Fast that the War Could not Keep Up.

YOUNG Tom Benton knocked at the Hermitage door one night five years later. Tom was booted and spurred and had arrived at the gallop. This is to be taken literally; figuratively, it would have been of small significance, for figuratively young Tom Benton always went booted and spurred and always rode at the gallop; and not only when he was young Tom but also after many years when he had become Old Bullion Benton he went through life headlong.

Tom Benton was an admirer of the General. He had encountered him in 1810 at the famous trial of the slayers of Patten Anderson, loyal supporter of Andrew Jackson, but a peppery fellow who engaged in one fight too many and was shot. They put the General on the stand and the defense counsel was striving to extort from the witness an admission that the deceased had been a violent man. But what he got was the famous Jacksonian reply:

"Sir, my friend, Patten Anderson, was the natural enemy of scoundrels!"

Benton came into personal contact with the General during the trial and fell completely under his spell. Jackson learned his history—that he was the son of a widow who had come from North Carolina and settled near Nashville—and said that Benton's father had extended hospitality back in North Carolina to the young law student, Jackson; therefore he was pleased to compliment the budding lawyer and to do him several small kindnesses. Then Benton became an intimate of the house and Rachel completed the conquest that her husband had begun. Her generosity, motherly kindliness, unfailing good-humor and keenness of wit captivated the youth, and the Hermitage became to him a second home.

It was but natural that he should take a lively interest in the organized militia which Jackson commanded, and he was honored with an appointment as aide-de-camp to the General. It was in his capacity of a military officer that he dashed up to Jackson's house that night in 1812; for he bore news of the call for volunteers.

This Benton is worthy of a moment's consideration, for he was a mighty man in his day. He had the quality which Carlyle admired in Boswell—even as a youth he knew a great man when he encountered one, and dared follow him through thick and thin. But he had a great many other qualities which the Scotsman lacked. He

had superb courage, moral as well as physical. He had a tremendous, overwhelming vitality, an exuberance that may have been oppressive at times but at other times was highly stimulating. He had the gift of sonorous rhetoric to a degree unparalleled even in that hey-day of sonorous rhetoricians. But, curiously enough for a rhetorician, he also had brains. He was honest. He became an adroit parliamentarian. He was a heavy-handed fighter and as tenacious as a bulldog.

He did more than admire Jackson. He loved him. He suffered cruelly at Jackson's hands, and in sheer self-respect had to leave him for awhile; but when the interest of the country made it possible for him to come back to the old loyalty he came with a glad heart, and thenceforth served faithfully to the end. Young Tom who became Old Bullion Benton had his faults, to be sure. He was, at least in his later years, pompous and windy and more than a bit of an ass. But he was a true man, and when the battle waxed desperate, when every poltroon fled and when the very air was filled with treachery, Thomas Hart Benton guarded his old commander's back so well that his name still shines through the mists of a hundred years.

He would have loved to be compared to the great lieutenants of history and legend, and indeed he earned the right to be named along with Achates and stout Herminius and Oliver and Porthos. A man of his qual-

ity adds somewhat to the glory of his leader merely in following him.

But of none of this did Young Tom dream when he thundered at the door of the Hermitage that night. His dreams were then all of glory to be won in the literal field of battle, of contests to be won with weapons of material steel. The country had gone fumbling and stumbling into war with England, a war for which nobody was prepared but the orators, a war in which New England was to turn frankly slacker and in which the frontier was to win all the small credit that was gained.

But it was upon no warlike scene that he intruded when he gained admittance to the presence of the commanding general. Let Old Bullion, speaking thirty years afterward with his irrepressible flair for the dramatic, describe what Young Tom saw:

> I arrived at his house one wet, chilly evening in February, and came upon him in the twilight, sitting alone before the fire, a lamb and a child between his knees. He started a little, called a servant to remove the two innocents to another room, and explained to me how it was. The child had cried because the lamb was out in the cold, and begged him to bring it in, which he had done to please the child, his adopted son, then not two years old.

Was Benton giving free rein to his perfervid imagination? Probably not. There is abundant evidence from other sources that the Hermitage was the abode of peace.

War, booted and spurred, might gallop up to the door; but once inside Mars became no more than the protector of innocents against bitter blasts.

At any rate, the adopted son was there. In 1809 the wife of one of Rachel Jackson's brothers bore twin boys, and as the mother's health was poor and scarcely equal to the task of rearing two youngsters, she agreed to send one of them to the Hermitage to bear the name and become the heir of its master. The child might have been taken in by Jackson out of simple charity; but the fact that there was a legal adoption and that the boy actually fell heir to Jackson's estate, argues the man's desire for children and his delight in having them around. Parton seems to be right in his assertion that there were two distinct and very different Jacksons, one outside his home, the other within it. It is another bit of evidence that Jackson's terrible temper never exploded except when it was reasonable to believe that something might be gained by an explosion. There is no record of any outburst of wrath directed against his wife, or his adopted child, or even against any of his personal attendants.

After a few years another nephew of Mrs. Jackson came to live at the Hermitage, and there are many stories of how mercilessly the two small boys harried the fearful Major-General, the terror of the frontier. But they grew to manhood with no recollection of the man

in any light other than of a tolerant, kind and endlessly patient father. Behind the frowning, warlike mask there was a great yearning for human affection. He found it in Rachel and in return he laid at her feet such a rich and passionate devotion as few women are fortunate enough to receive, a devotion that increased, not diminished, with his rise in the world and that glowed into a veritable fury of tenderness when villains essayed to drag him down by dragging at her. From the babies, too, he got that cool, careless but entrancing affection that babies stand ready to give anyone who is gentle with them; and in return he lavished upon them the care, the pride and affection of a wise father. From certain men, for example, from Benton, and Edward Livingston and Martin Van Buren and unfortunately from some less worthy, he got the affection of a man for his friend, and his response was veritably tremendous. Not only were his purse and his influence theirs to command, but they could, in sober, literal earnest, have had his heart's blood.

Jackson's genius for making enemies was so startling that it has become one of the most widely-known facts of American history. But because it did not culminate in pistol-shots and sulphurous language his genius for making friends startled nobody and has therefore been overlooked. Yet it is but the reverse of the medal. The man's passions ran high, but his love ran higher than

his hate. He spent more, he risked more, he endured more to gratify his affections than he ever did to appease his wrath.

But young Tom Benton brought news that compelled him to dismiss lambs and little boys from his thoughts. The country was at war. Reflective President Jefferson had carried into private life what visions he may have had of a resemblance between a swart Corsican and a gaunt Orangeman, and the great little Madison was President in his stead. A bewildered and apprehensive President he was, too, facing a war which he was in no wise prepared to fight, and which relatively few of his own countrymen seemed disposed to help him fight. In front of him Old England, grimly clearing for action, was hardly more dreadful to contemplate than was New England behind him, howling bloody murder and threatening to bolt to the enemy camp. War abroad, sedition at home, no army, no navy, no money, no men —he was a bewildered and apprehensive President indeed.

Then, prompt upon the declaration of war came a voice from the West. Governor Blount, of Tennessee, had the honor to inform the President that Major-General Andrew Jackson was ready to march with twenty-five hundred volunteers. Aide-de-camp Tom and the General had put in a night's hard work, from which they had emerged with complete mobilization orders for the

General Jackson Goes to War

brigade, including tables of organization, points of rendezvous, specifications of uniform and equipment, and all else that was necessary. Incidentally, Young Tom emerged, not as aide-de-camp, but as Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas H. Benton, if you please, commanding a regiment of infantry!

To a bewildered and apprehensive President this news came as a double shock. After New England it was a delightful surprise to discover men who were for America first. But to discover that the first officer of militia ready to move was, of all people, Andrew Jackson of Tennessee, Jackson, the back-firing witness, the associate of Aaron the Attainted, the man who had praised Burr and denounced the administration in which James Madison was Secretary of State, the wild insurgent from the frontier—to find this man first of all to rally to the flag must have been the shock of Mr. Madison's life. However Mr. Madison's Secretary of War wrote a positively ardent letter of appreciation to Governor Blount and the Tennessee Volunteers were listed as an emergency resource.

Soon it was all too plain that there were likely to be plenty of emergencies. The campaign against Canada was not so much defeated as detonated. It blew up from within. Ignorance and incompetence were in the high command. Lack of training, lack of discipline, lack of equipment and lack of pretty much everything

else among line officers and the rank and file resulted in lack of endurance in the troops. The army went to Canada, although nobody seemed to know why. Then it came back from Canada, and still nobody knew why. General Hull arrived in Detroit apparently without the foggiest notion of what he was doing there or whither he was bound. But an enemy force approached and then Hull had an idea, the first clear-cut, definite and original idea evolved by any American general since war was declared. He surrendered.

At the other end of the Mississippi River General James Wilkinson, he of the Burr conspiracy, commanding at New Orleans, received the news of Hull's surrender as if it had been a bomb dropped under his chair. General Wilkinson instantly began to see visions of the massed fleets of Great Britain bearing down upon New Orleans, bringing myriads of soldiers to sweep the river valley. Nor were his visions altogether fantastic. Michigan was in the hands of the British. If they might now seize Louisiana and move one force up the river and another down, they could make things unpleasantly warm for the Americans. Even Washington could see that, and accordingly orders went to Governor Blount to dispatch fifteen hundred militia to support General Wilkinson. The order was issued October 21. November 1 Governor Blount transmitted it to General Jackson. December 10 the brigade mobilized, two thousand

and seventy strong, instead of fifteen hundred. January 7 it began to move. And February 15 it was at Natchez, within striking distance of New Orleans, five hundred miles by land and a thousand by water from Nashville.

In other words, Jackson had raised, officered, armed and equipped two thousand men and moved them a thousand miles to the danger point all within less than four months. This feat fairly screamed efficiency; but so befuddled were official ears at Washington that they took no notice whatever. Any clear-headed official must have seen at a glance that here was an officer who could get things done. Lack of officers of that sort was sending the northern and eastern armies from calamity to catastrophe; and each succeeding failure stimulated the lungs of the bellowing New England defeatists.

There was a beautifully suggestive comparison at hand, even in the South. Wilkinson, the regular officer, had been told that a force was mobilizing in Tennessee and would move to reinforce him; but Jackson moved so fast that Wilkinson had not time even to prepare quarters for his troops. Before the leisurely regular had secured food for men, feed for horses, tents, huts or any other shelter at New Orleans, the whirlwind militiaman was upon him. Wilkinson, moving rapidly for the first time, sent a hasty message to Jackson to halt at Natchez

until quarters could be prepared. So the Tennessee Volunteers sat down on the bluff above Natchez and waited for the war to catch up.

There was a man named Lewis in the outfit who could have told the War Department a great deal about how this apparent miracle was accomplished. William B. Lewis was Jackson's quartermaster. When orders went out for the troops to assemble at Nashville on the tenth of December, it was Lewis' task to make ready for them. As it turned out, the night of the tenth was one of the coldest ever known in the region around Nashville, and there was no possibility of sheltering so many men in the village. But Lewis was a real quartermaster, and one of the items he had provided was a thousand cords of wood, which he thought would be enough for the camp until the brigade started down the river. Every stick was burned that night. Officers were provided with beds in the village, but two officers did not use them. The commanding general and the quartermaster all that bitter night walked up and down the camp, seeing personally to the safety from freezing, if not exactly the comfort, of the men. This keen eye for detail, this relentless determination to ascertain personally that his orders were being effectively and properly executed, are eloquent of the born commander; and so, perhaps, was the reaction, described by Parton, to a grumbler when at six o'clock the general, fatigued and

half frozen, plodded into the tavern. The grumbler, having just turned out of a warm bed, was excoriating the authorities for not having made better preparations for the men while the officers were well warmed all night.

"You damned infernal scoundrel!" howled the General. "Sowing disaffection among the troops! Why, the quartermaster and I have been up all night, making the men comfortable. Let me hear no more such talk, or I'm damned if I don't ram that red-hot andiron down your throat."

It was work, hard, grinding work, immense amounts of work coupled with fierce determination to permit no obstacle to stand in the way that sent the expedition down the river before Wilkinson could collect tents for it. The quartermaster knew it. The staff knew it. The troops knew it, and settled down to the campaign content, since it was evident that the Old Man knew his job. Every man in the ranks soon realized that while he might be hard as nails, the man running things was straight and he was no swivel-chair soldier. Consequently *morale* rose steadily and there was no hint of disaffection in the Tennessee Volunteers.

But Washington couldn't see it. Washington had no eyes for studying men. It was still obessed with the notion that the only proper way to conduct a war was to turn armies over to ossified old dug-outs, relics of

the Revolution, forgetting the obvious truth that the very fact that a man was a good soldier thirty-five years ago is proof positive that he is too old to take command today. So it continued to lose battle after battle and army after army. Court-martialing Hull and sentencing him to be shot didn't encourage the others, notwithstanding the French maxim. Cashiering Smythe didn't encourage the others. Nothing encouraged the poor old fellows who were doing their best, but who were long past fighting age. It was a cruel thing to send these ancients out to destruction, not of their columns only, but also of their honorable reputations; but then stupidity is always cruel.

After a while, though, it became evident that Great Britain was not bearing down upon New Orleans, and then, some time in February, somebody vaguely remembered that the previous October a man named Jackson in Tennessee had been ordered to raise troops to be used in case the British attacked Louisiana. It is beautifully illustrative of the mental vacuity of the War Department that nobody knew exactly where the man was; but it was blithely assumed that if he had done anything at all he could not have raised a body of troops and moved them very far, since it was now only four months since he had been ordered out. Therefore orders were dispatched to General Jackson, wherever he might be, to discharge whatever troops he might have collected on

the spot, for the emergency was over. And with that all thinking about Jackson was suspended in Washington.

But late in March when the order arrived in the camp above Natchez Jackson thought about Washington. Moreover, he talked about Washington. Discharge his Tennesseeans here, five hundred miles from home, without pay, without rations, without transportation and a hundred and fifty of them sick, to boot? It would be murder! The General sent for Benton, first, and then for the rest of his staff, and his conversation mounted and mounted and mounted to such dizzy, lurid and unheard-of heights of original profanity that the whole army was amazed and enchanted. Then Benton must sit down and transcribe a letter to the Secretary of War so violently insubordinate that Colonel Tom was appalled and begged for some softening of the language, but in vain. Then there was another letter to the President, and one to Governor Blount, and one to General Wilkinson. That worthy, whose fate it seemed always to exasperate Jackson, made the brilliant suggestion that Jackson's volunteers might come down individually to New Orleans and enlist in *his* army; to which the reply was that if any recruiting officer of Wilkinson's were caught hanging around Natchez he should be drummed out of camp in the presence of the whole corps.

But rage alone never moved infantry; so Jackson turned to Natchez to see what could be done. The people of the region gave him all the support they could, and he requisitioned such supplies as were available. He told the merchants frankly that he was acting against orders and perhaps the drafts which he gave them in payment for their goods might not be honored; but he promised, in that case, to make them good himself. On that understanding the goods were supplied, and the army started its homeward march financed by its commanding general personally.

If Washington had had eyes to see, here was the final test of the man as a military officer. He had proved that he had energy. He had proved that he had organizing ability. He had proved that he could handle men in camp and on the march. All this was shown by the fact that he had raised his brigade, moved it to Natchez and kept it well in hand. Now he had proved that when he was on the ground and could estimate the situation for himself he would unhesitatingly assume responsibility and act on his own initiative—the final, hardest test of a good commander.

But Washington saw only that Jackson had disobeyed orders, sworn at General Wilkinson, called the Secretary of War an old granny, and drawn on the government without authorization. So his drafts were protested, and in the spring the general found himself facing financial

ruin because he had brought the Tennessee Volunteers home.

Then Young Tom Benton flung himself into the breach. Having business in Washington he undertook, while there, to present General Jackson's claim and press it upon the War Department. The creditors were induced to delay action until they could hear from him. But in Washington he was put off with one excuse after another. The delay granted by the creditors was drawing to an end, and it was evident that leisurely Washington had no intention of increasing its gait merely to save Andrew Jackson from ruin. So Benton emerged for the first time in the character he was to play through many brilliant years in Jackson's behalf, the character of the political strategist. He mildly suggested to the Secretary that it was June of a Presidential year; that by risking his personal fortune to bring the Volunteers home Jackson had become the idol of Tennessee; and that if the Administration allowed him to be ruined by that deed, what the voters of Tennessee would do to the Administration on election day would make an Indian massacre look like a Sunday-School picnic.

Two days later orders were issued that General Jackson's drafts were to be honored.

CHAPTER XIII

How General Jackson Fought the Bentons and the Indians and Beat the Indians.

AT this juncture occurred one of those cries with which Jackson's career is punctuated, crises compounded almost equally of absurdity and horror, leaving one in doubt whether to laugh or to shudder.

While Thomas H. Benton was in Washington his brother, Jesse, a vain and pugnacious individual, became involved in a difficulty with a young officer on Jackson's staff. A challenge was issued and the officer, Captain Carroll, asked Jackson to act as his second. It was an inordinate request for a captain to make of his commanding general, and not a particularly delicate one for a youngster in his twenties to make of a man of forty-five. Jackson refused, but Carroll was insistent, declaring that no one else would act for him since a conspiracy existed to drive him out of the country, and eventually Jackson, against his better judgment, consented.

The duel resulted frightfully. No one was killed. No one was dangerously wounded in body, but Jesse

Benton was hideously mangled in spirit. Having fired, he unfortunately stooped just in time to receive a raking wound from Carroll's bullet which, although trifling as a wound, made it impossible for him to sit down for a long time. Of course all the wags in the country fell upon the incident with wild delight, and for a man of Jesse's unfortunate temperament their efforts made life a burden. Within a few weeks they had reduced the victim to a state of frenzy in which any sort of calm judgment was totally impossible, and the account of the affair which he wrote to his brother, then on his way back to Tennessee, painted Jackson in appalling colors. Thomas demanded an explanation, which Jackson endeavored to make; but Jesse's ravings drowned out the reasons, none too strong at best, for his appearance behind Carroll. Thomas exploded into bitter vituperation of the man whom he had just snatched from financial ruin, and Jackson, in his turn, blew up and swore he would horsewhip Tom Benton on sight.

So great has been the alteration in manners and customs that it is all but impossible for this generation to realize how seriously such idiocies were taken on the frontier a hundred years ago. But according to the code of the time and place Jackson, having made the vow, would have lost caste had he failed to act upon it; while Benton was equally bound to resist with deadly weapons.

To his credit, Benton did seek to avoid an encounter

as far as he could consistently with honor, but they met at last in Nashville. Benton was standing in the door of a tavern when Jackson advanced upon him, riding whip in hand. Benton made as if to draw, whereupon Jackson whipped out a pistol and covered him, still advancing. Benton took a step backward, then another, and so they proceeded through the hall and on to a porch at the rear. At this moment Jesse appeared and instantly shot Jackson down. John Coffee, who had followed Jackson as far as the front door of the tavern, leaped into the hall and seeing his friend down assumed that Thomas Benton had shot him; he therefore fired point-blank at Thomas and would probably have ended his career then and there had not Thomas, still stepping backward, stepped into the head of a flight of stairs and fallen down them at the moment of the discharge. Stokely Hays, a gigantic man and a devoted friend of the general, also rushed in at the sound of the shot, but he perceived who had fired and lunged at Jesse with the blade of his sword-cane. The blade struck a button and snapped short, whereupon Hays snatched out a dirk and charged Jesse so heavily that both crashed to the floor, Jesse underneath. The prostrate man seized the coat-cuff of his assailant, and diverted, although he could not stop, the descending point of the dirk, which gashed the fleshy part of his left arm instead of piercing his heart. Hays strove furiously to disengage his arm, and in

so doing inflicted several other flesh wounds upon Jesse; but as he finally tore his cuff loose and raised the knife for the *coup de grace* a bystander gripped his wrist. Thomas Benton, momentarily dazed by his fall, had meantime collected himself, leaped back to the scene of the fight and fired wildly; but other bystanders then seized him and the combatants were dragged apart.

Jesse's pistol had been loaded with two balls and a slug. One ball struck the partition at Jackson's side, but the other buried itself in his left arm while the slug shattered his left shoulder. The wounded man lost an incredible quantity of blood—two mattresses, Mrs. Jackson used to say, were soaked through before the hemorrhage could be stopped—and most of the doctors, all in Nashville being presently in attendance, recommended amputation of the arm, which was vetoed by the patient.

Yet, curiously enough, Thomas Benton did not know for two years that Jackson had been hit. The town and the region round about seem to have risen against the Benton brothers. At least Thomas quit the country shortly thereafter, giving as his excuse that he was being hounded by "Jackson's puppies"; but he was not the man to take fright at the baying of any number of puppies, after having faced the old bulldog himself. It seems reasonable to conjecture that heartbreak over the apparent treason of his friend and old commander

had a great deal more effect than fear of Jackson's followers in causing Benton to leave Tennessee. At any rate, he joined the regular army, served through the war, rose to a lieutenant-colonelcy, then resigned his commission and resumed the practice of law in St. Louis. He never went back to Nashville.

Yet at the moment when Jackson and the Bentons were engaged in their puerile combat, a menace was looming over Tennessee so frightful that every man capable of bearing arms should have had his attention fixed upon it. Just below the Tennessee border, in what is now the States of Alabama and Mississippi, lay the strong and warlike nation of the Creek Indians. They, in common with all the other Indian tribes from the Gulf to Canada, had been for four years listening to the exhortations of the famous chief, Tecumseh and his brother the Prophet. General Harrison had indeed smashed the Prophet at the battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, and put a temporary quietus on Tecumseh's schemes; but the outbreak of war with England set that able conspirator busily at work again. He enlisted in his cause the ablest of the Creeks chiefs, the half-breed Weathersford, and August 29, 1813, Weathersford with a thousand warriors fell upon Fort Mims, in southern Alabama, and massacred four hundred white men, women and children.

The news reached Nashville September 18, when the

ranking officer of the State's troops had been two weeks in bed with a smashed shoulder, and apparently was out of action for an indefinite time. But it was a matter of appearances, for when the legislature met a week later and promptly passed a war bill, authorizing the raising of 3,500 militia, it was found that mobilization orders for the division had been printed before the bill was signed. The legislator who introduced the bill called at the General's house and mentioned his regret "that the General entitled to command was not in condition to take the field." To which the sufferer, gritting his teeth to suppress the groans that the slightest movement extorted from him, replied:

"The devil in hell, he is not!"

The next day Colonel John Coffee, with five hundred horse, took the road to Huntsville, in northern Alabama, while orders went to the infantry to mobilize at Fayetteville, on the southern edge of Tennessee, October 4. At the bottom of the order was a note stating that the health of the commanding general was restored.

The day set was exactly one month from the day that Jesse Benton fired. When the time came the General, his left arm tightly bound and his left sleeve empty, had to be hoisted into the saddle, for he was too weak to mount; and as the march toward Fayetteville, eighty miles away, proceeded frequent halts had to be made while the attending physician applied solutions of sugar

of lead to keep down the inflamation. With all his exertions, however, he could not make the rendezvous in time and it was October 7 before he reached Fayetteville, where a thousand militiamen were assembled. But there was one bit of news which he welcomed. Coffee reported that the Indians, instead of moving on Mobile, as he had feared and expected, apparently had turned and were marching north to meet him.

"It is surely high gratification," he wrote Coffee, "to learn that the Creeks are so attentive to my situation as to save me the pain of traveling. I must not be outdone in politeness, and will therefore endeavor to meet them on the middle ground."

There followed a week of such strenuous, nerve-racking and body-racking labor as can be imagined only by those who have participated in, or at least observed, an effort to whip raw militia into something resembling a combat unit. It is a task fit to prostrate a strong man, and it might have been expected to kill a man suffering from a severe wound; but Jackson appeared to mend daily.

At the end of a week rumor announced that the Indians were about to attack Coffee. Jackson was on the move within sixty minutes after receiving the news, and the command marched thirty-two miles in an amazingly short time—Parton says five hours, Bassett says eleven. The rumor proved groundless and the next day

the pace was more leisurely, but the army continued to move until it had reached and crossed the Tennessee River.

And there, for the moment, it stuck. There began the series of embarrassments that were to make the Creek War a nightmare indeed to the commanding general. At Nashville, when the campaign was being planned, Major General John Cocke, the junior general commanding the First division which was drawn from East Tennessee, had said that his territory could raise supplies for both his division and the Second, General Jackson's command. Jackson accordingly depended on Cocke to bring supplies down the Tennessee River. But they did not come. Apparently Cocke had raised them, and had transported them to the water's edge; but at that point, three hundred miles upstream from Jackson's camp, the river was low, and contractors declared it impossible to transport supplies down to the hungry army. For a week Jackson drilled his troops furiously, while they tightened their belts daily. But no supplies came. Then he hacked and hewed his way through the forest twenty-two miles up the river, expecting at any moment to see the flotilla of flatboats for which he longed. But no supplies were in sight.

By this time the situation was becoming desperate. Jackson sent foraging parties in every direction. He wrote imploring letters to every official in Tennessee.

He ordered his own quartermaster, Major Lewis, back to Nashville to collect food. And his opinion of, and comments upon Major General John Cocke cannot be even vaguely outlined in decorous words.

Three possible courses presented themselves. He could sit still and starve. He could march forward and starve. Or he could fall back upon Tennessee, delivering the border to massacre, pillage and fire. He chose the second, and with two days' supply of bread plunged into the heart of the Creek country. Coffee's cavalry, scouring the country in advance of the main body, captured a little corn from time to time. Friendly Indians furnished some scanty supplies. But at that the army was presently roasting acorns and preparing to butcher the horses. Still, it kept moving, and at the end of a week was in the vicinity of Ten Islands on the Coosa River. There news came that the Indians were mustering at a village thirteen miles away, and the first real blow of the war was struck. Coffee's brigade was ordered to attack the place, which it did on the morning of November 3, killing a hundred and eighty-six warriors and capturing eighty-four women and children. Coffee's losses were five killed and forty-one wounded.

The affair brought in no food, but it inspirited the troops, and was swiftly followed by a feat even more brilliant. Thirty miles from Jackson's camp on the Coosa was a small fort in which a hundred and fifty friendly

Indians had taken refuge. This place, on the site of the modern town of Talladega, was suddenly invested by a thousand Creeks, who settled down to besiege it.

Jackson, in the meantime, had fortified his camp and named it Fort Strother. Cocke at last was approaching, and the advance guard, under General White, was very near. On November 7 it was expected the next day; but on that day an exhausted Indian staggered into the place, bearing news of the siege. Jackson, knowing White was at hand, sent orders for him to occupy Fort Strother and himself marched out that very evening with his whole command except a handful of men left partly to guard the post but mainly to attend the sick. By sunset the next day he had covered twenty-four of the thirty miles and halted to rest his men before the attack; and then came a messenger from General White saying that by General Cocke's orders he was retreating upon the main body and therefore could not occupy Fort Strother, which was thus left practically defenseless. The wrath and dismay of Jackson did not, however, cloud his judgment. Instead of retreating to cover his exposed base, he resolved to strike at the enemy, and at sunrise the next morning he fell upon the besiegers furiously. His troops behaved, on the whole, excellently and the Creeks were utterly routed, leaving behind them two hundred and ninety dead.

But this brought in no provisions and the next day

the army marched back to Fort Strother having had scarcely one full meal in thirty-six hours. Surely, thought Jackson, supplies must have arrived during his absence. The fort, though, was as bare as when he had left it. Even his small store of private supplies, bought and transported at his own expense, had been used for the sick, and for several days the General and his staff subsisted on tripe, without bread or seasoning. A short time later the newspapers had it that a meal in the Major-General's tent at Fort Strother consisted of a plate of roasted acorns and a pitcher of water.

Then the Hillabees, an important tribe of the Creeks, impressed by the rout at Talladega, sued for peace, and for a moment it seemed probable that the war was to end in the collapse of the enemy. But while the messenger was on his way back with Jackson's terms the luckless Cocke, knowing nothing of the negotiations, fell upon a Hillabee town and wiped it out, instantly consolidating the Hillabees in their allegiance to the Creeks. It seemed to be the fate of General Cocke to omit no act that was likely to madden his superior officer.

Ten days of inaction and starvation in Fort Strother proved too much for the troops. The militia revolted, and decided to return home; but Jackson, hearing of it in time, blocked the road with the volunteers. The next day, however, the volunteers were mutinous, but when they attempted to march out of the camp they found

that the General had blocked the road with the militia. They saw the point of the joke, and returned to camp in fairly good humor. The cavalry, though, were granted permission to retire on Huntsville to save their famished horses, and the temper of the whole body of infantry grew rapidly worse. Finally Jackson was reduce to pleading with them to remain only two days longer when, if no supplies arrived, he would himself march them back.

No supplies arrived and the General was called upon to make good his promise. He started, as he had agreed, but within twelve miles of the camp they met a drove of a hundred and fifty cattle. The column was halted, a number of beeves were killed and the troops were fed on the spot. But they had no idea of returning to Fort Strother. Instead, they started determinedly down the road toward home, and then occurred one of the incidents that have colored all men's memory of Jackson since.

He made a detour, got on the road in front of the mutinous troops, and began to tell them what he thought of them. Parton suspects that it was from this moment that his hair, which in the earlier pictures lies flat on his head, assumed that bristling posture characteristic of all the later representations. At any rate, all spectators agreed that the man was a very basilisk in appearance as he stood there, and the testimony is fervent and unani-

mous that such profane remarks as he may have uttered at Natchez when he was ordered to leave his Tennesseeans in the wilderness were mild as milk by comparison with the blast he hurled in the faces of the astonished front rank. The column halted, petrified. The long, gaunt man, with his left arm still in a sling raved. His body vibrated with passion. His eyes seemed to spit blue fire. Finally, he snatched a rifle from the hands of a spell-bound soldier, rested it upon the back of his horse with the muzzle unwaveringly upon the mutineers and swore a final shattering oath to blow into eternity the first man who moved a foot!

A pause, then an awed voice in the rear announced, with conviction, "Damned if I don't believe the old fellow will shoot!"

The column wavered, recoiled, broke, and the mutineers started plodding surlily back to camp. Then the soldier who had been deprived of his weapon recovered the use of his limbs and came to get it.

"Why, General," he said, "that gun ain't loaded—not even primed!"

However, the mutiny was quelled for the moment only, and as the winter wore on Jackson was compelled to send back to Tennessee unit after unit to prevent wholesale desertions. The men's term of enlistment was running out. December 12 Cocke at last arrived at Fort Strother, but not a man of his two thousand had

General Jackson Quelling the Mutiny

more than a month to serve. By the middle of January the army had melted away, except for nine hundred raw recruits, enlisted some for two and some for three months.

This was, however, the dark hour before the dawn. With his raw recruits Jackson made a fairly successful raid into the territory of the enemy, which did much to stimulate recruiting in Tennessee; and on February 6 the 39th United States infantry marched into Fort Strother. Washington, indeed, was hardly aware that there was a fight going on in the South, and the regulars were under orders to proceed to New Orleans, but Colonel Williams, commanding, took the responsibility of marching to Jackson's relief instead.

Major Lewis, also, had been performing Herculean labors in the way of collecting and transporting supplies. By the middle of March Jackson was able to move with three thousand men and a fairly reliable system of supply behind him. Just before the start mutiny threatened again. A soldier, John Woods by name, refused to obey a command and reviled the officer who gave it. Jackson promptly had him shot and there was no more talk of revolt.

Steadily the army moved south until, fifty-five miles below Fort Strother, they found the Creeks on a peninsula formed by a bend in the Tallapoosa River. They had fortified this place and were confident of their

ability to defend it against any force that could be brought against it. But Jackson ordered Coffee across the river and that admirable subordinate managed to throw a small force into the rear of the enemy encampment at the moment when the Creeks were expecting Jackson's assault from in front. This diversion of their attention certainly aided the success of the assault when it did come. The infantry took the line of fortifications by storm and there ensued a terrific combat in the brushwood of the peninsula itself. All day the fighting continued, no quarter being given or asked, and most of the night; but by the next morning there was no living Indian warrior left in the place and the victors counted five hundred and fifty-seven dead. Jackson's loss was fifty-five killed and one hundred and forty-six wounded.

This battle of Horseshoe Bend was virtually the end of the Creek War. Jackson pushed rapidly on to the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers, known to the Indians as the Holy Ground, and there the chiefs began to come in and surrender. Eventually Weathersford yielded, and the Creeks were finished as a fighting power, except for a few who escaped into Florida.

Horseshoe Bend was fought on March 27. April 29, Major-General Thomas Pinckney, of the regular army, with a force of South Carolinians, arrived and assumed command; and the next day Jackson's Tennesseeans were ordered home.

But if the campaign was finished, the campaigner was all but finished with it. From the Creek War to the end of his days, Andrew Jackson was a sick man. Only the indomitable will that dragged him out of bed in spite of his shattered shoulder kept him going. Chronic diarrhoea was the form his ailment assumed, although it is probable that tuberculosis was already beginning to ravage his lungs. The tortures the man suffered in camp and field are horrible to think upon. Again and again, when the agony was upon him, he had to be lifted from his horse and hang over a bent sapling until the pain subsided. An hour of excitement was sufficient to prostrate him for days and nights. He framed his orders and wrote his dispatches many times when it seemed that he could hardly hold the pen. His digestion, of course, was a wreck and so it remained for the rest of his life.

It was at a terrible price that he purchased his victory.

CHAPTER XIV

How General Jackson Won the War After it Was Over.

IT was upon the march back from Natchez, when the general commanding surrendered his horse to transport the sick and on foot out-marched the best of the infantry, that the men began to remark his physical toughness and compared it to that of seasoned hickory, from which circumstance arose his army nickname of Old Hickory. But it was in the Creek War that he proved the aptness of the appellation. He couldn't walk thirty miles a day at the head of a column then. He was fit for nothing except a hospital. But he survived, and victory was such a tonic that he was much improved when he got back to Nashville and Rachel's nursing. He was then at least half alive, which was more than he had been all winter.

The country was stumbling into the most catastrophic year of the calamitous war, the year during which both Englands, the Old and the New, were to deliver their heaviest and most damaging blows upon the United States, and together beat the country to its knees. Within a few months a British army was to lay Wash-

ington in ashes, and a Hartford Convention was to begin preaching sedition openly. Already the Government's credit was all but entirely destroyed, and presently it was discounting its securities by twenty per cent. But at this dark moment it made, almost inadvertently, the move that eventually reëstablished the wavering faith of Americans in their own capacities. It offered a commission in the regular army to Andrew Jackson.

It could hardly do less, for in the long list of calamities that constituted the tale of American military operations the Creek campaign stood out conspicuously. It was a success, a clear-cut, definite, unmistakable success, therefore a brilliant novelty which no one could overlook—no one, that is, except the War Department, which seemed to cling to the theory that the last qualification that should be demanded of an officer was demonstrated ability to win fights. But the western members of Congress were roaring for a commission for Jackson, and a brigadier-generalship was finally offered him. However, Jackson did not come into the army that way. At this juncture, Major-General William Henry Harrison, almost the only other American officer who had proved that he could win a battle, fell afoul of the Secretary of War and after a heated exchange resigned. His commission was instantly offered to Jackson, so there is to this day a doubt that the Administration actually picked one general officer because he was a soldier.

They picked Jackson, indeed, but there is more than a suspicion that he was selected, not really on his record, but because commissioning him as a major general was a neat way of shelving Harrison.

However, selected he was, and as General Wilkinson had been transferred to the Northwest, Jackson was ordered first to make a definitive treaty of peace with the Creeks and then to assume command of the Southern department with headquarters at New Orleans.

Treaty-making consumed a month, and then the new commander of the department swung southward and fell upon Spain, hitherto a neutral!

The amazing incapacity prevailing among authorities during the conduct of this war is well illustrated by the course of events during the operations in the South. In the first place, an attack on New Orleans was the logical move for the British. In the second place, a huge expedition was fitting out in the West Indies, and Washington knew it. In the third place, an advance guard of the British had actually seized the Spanish port of Pensacola, Florida. In the fourth place, the commander of that force, a Colonel named Nichols, had kindly issued a proclamation addressed to the inhabitants of Louisiana and Kentucky informing them that he was coming. In the fifth place, a British naval officer had offered in writing $30,000 and a captaincy in the British navy to Jean Lafitte, a dubious citizen of lower

Louisiana, if Lafitte would assist the British in an attack on New Orleans; and Lafitte, making a noncommittal answer, had forwarded the documents to Governor Claiborne, of Louisiana. All of which induced Governor Claiborne to give expression to the remarkable theory that any attempt by the British to wrest Louisiana from the Americans was "too chimerical" to be given "serious consideration."

Therefore he sent a naval expedition against Lafitte's gang of free-booters on the island of Barrataria and burned their town, although without capturing Jean.

But he also sent a copy of the Lafitte report to Major-General Jackson, who viewed it in a different light. The General was, in fact, badly worried. A remnant of the warlike Creeks had fled into Florida, where, according to trustworthy reports, they were being sheltered by the Spaniards and armed by the British. He wrote to the War Department begging for permission to go after them. It now appears that it was granted, but the letter authorizing the move was six months on its way to Jackson and reached him only after the war was over. Then the British descended upon Pensacola, and when Jackson remonstrated against the violation of neutrality, the Spanish Governor took a lordly tone and advised him to attend to his own business.

Jackson took the hint. He concentrated on Mobile every available man, hurrying down the militia from

Tennessee, through the Creek country which he had so recently cleared for the passage of American troops. But before the Tennesseeans could arrive, the British attacked Fort Bowyer, the defender of Mobile Bay, into which Jackson had put a garrison of a hundred and sixty men. The attackers lost one of their ships and were beaten off, but the affair taught Jackson, if he needed teaching, how deadly was the menace of British occupation of Pensacola. He resolved to eliminate that menace the moment he had assembled a force strong enough.

November 25 came the welcome news that Coffee had arrived on the Mobile River with twenty-eight hundred men. This raised the total number of effectives available to four thousand, and the critical moment was at hand. But before the army could move, Jackson encountered again the old spectre that had arisen so often before him in the Creek wilderness, mutiny! Two hundred of the Tennesseeans deserted and started home and the old quarrel about terms of enlistment threatened to break out again.

But this time the commander was not alone against an army wholly disaffected. He was now a regular officer, and he had reliable regular troops at hand. The two hundred mutineers were promptly pursued and rounded up, and a number of them sent to court-martial. In the end six of them were shot to death with musketry, although this tragic climax occurred months later.

But the arrests, and the terrific threats of the commander were enough to impress the whole force. The mutiny was quelled.

Then Jackson lunged at Pensacola. This time he did not protest. He ordered the Governor to turn the British out, and when that official gave an evasive reply, he stormed the town. The British took to their ships, blew up the fort at the entrance of the harbor and sailed away, while the Spanish Governor rushed out with a white flag and when the Americans refrained from burning the town grew positively lyrical in his expressions of friendship and his praise of General Jackson.

Within four days after his start the army was back in Mobile, and within four weeks the Federalist press of the North was reviling Jackson in unmeasured terms for his "wanton violation" of the neutrality of a friendly power. But New Orleans, for the moment, was safe.

But only for the moment. It was perfectly obvious, now, that a tremendous effort against the city was in preparation. A fleet of fifty vessels, with fifteen thousand men aboard, was even then assembling in Negril Bay, Jamaica, and alarming news of the rendezvous was arriving in New Orleans almost daily. Therefore, in the middle of December, Jackson repaired to the threatened city.

It was high time for someone to take charge, for the confusion of counsels is all but incredible. Governor Claiborne, indeed, had at last come to the conclusion that the danger was not chimerical, and had called the legislature into session; but that body met only to engage in a series of factional fights that rendered it impotent, in so far as concerting effective measures of defense was concerned. It appropriated no money. It provided no means for raising troops. It quarreled incessantly with Governor Claiborne when its members were not bickering with each other. It was worse than useless.

However, although the legislature did little except get in the way, there was at least one man in the town who was full of energy. His ideas were rather vague, but Edward Livingston did organize a Committee of Defense, and did spur the men, especially the young men, of the city into some activity. This Livingston was Jackson's friend in the House of Representatives, the New York aristocrat now fallen on evil days. After his service in Washington Livingston had become simultaneously Federal Attorney for New York and mayor of the city, both being then appointive offices. In the yellow fever epidemic of 1803 his conduct as mayor was admirable, for he not only stuck to his post when most of the aristocrats had fled in terror, but he directed the relief work and when inspections and investigations had to be made in peculiarly pestilential quarters it was the

mayor, worthy for once of the title "His Honor," who made the dangerous excursions. Presently he contracted the disease, and although he escaped with his life it cost him all else that he had in the world; for when he arose after a long prostration it was to find that trusted subordinates in the Federal Attorney's office had stolen fifty thousand dollars of the government's money, for which he was responsible.

Edward Livingston never held himself blameless in this matter. He had appointed the rascals, and while he was busy fighting the plague, first as a public official and later as a patient, he had necessarily taken his eye off his appointees, thus affording them the opportunity to loot the public till. He recognized his responsibility, resigned both his offices, flung his personal fortune into the breach to make good the stealings of others, and removed to New Orleans without a dollar, to make a new start in life at forty.

Thirty-five years afterward, when Andrew Jackson was dying in Tennessee, Senator Henry Clay, of Kentucky, in a campaign speech referred sneeringly to Edward Livingston as a defaulter; and when Old Andrew heard of it, half dead as he was, he rose up to write to Henry Clay in terms so violent, so corrosive, so highly un-Christian that the pious were dreadfully shocked. Edward Livingston was dead then and could not defend himself, but while his old commander had

breath enough to give his detractors the lie, he never lacked a defender.

But all this was in the far distant future when Major-General Andrew Jackson rode down to New Orleans to take command of the defense of the town, and appointed as one of his aides-de-camp Edward Livingston, leader of the local bar, and organizer of the Committee of Defense. The only event of the future which was even guessed was the certainty that the English would presently be upon the place. Jackson arrived in the morning and before he went to bed that night a tentative plan of defense had been outlined and practically every citizen's part in the work had been decided. The real spirit of the city is demonstrated by the fact that it instantly accepted the dispositions of the commander and the next morning went to work with a will. New Orleans had been a community of brawlers, contending for picayune advantages, without a plan, without an idea, and apparently without the will to put up a fight. Overnight it became an organized fighting force, working vigorously and efficiently at the preparation of its defense. New Orleans, at heart, was sound. It had to have a leader, but all it needed was a leader.

But the time was desperately short. Nine days later the British were ashore. They had not attempted to come up the river, but had advanced across Lake Borgne, back of the city, brushing aside the system of defenses

hastily prepared to cover that approach, and under the command of General Keane had marched rapidly through the marshes to the firm ground along the river. The operation was conducted with skill and energy and Keane was out of the mud before Jackson could make a move.

But he did not fail to move, and move rapidly and energetically. With his whole available force he fell furiously upon the British that night, and while he could not drive Keane back into the swamps, as he had hoped, he staggered him. Coffee skirted the swamps and struck the Briton's right flank. The gunboat Carolina dropped down the river and bombarded his left, while Jackson attacked his center. The plan was a good one, but not good enough for troops as steady as those under Keane's command. Although thrown into confusion by the suddenness and vigor of the assault, they held their ground and beat off the attacks. However, the clash immobilized them. They waited for reinforcements.

Jackson, also, learned something by the operation. He found that the men who had beaten Napoleon were not to be driven off the field by his raw levies fighting in the open, were the numbers even; and he realized that presently the advantage of numbers would belong to the British. He therefore took the only course open to him—fell back a mile or two and threw up breast-

works. The British also fortified their camp. And so the armies lay on the plains below New Orleans, each striving desperately to fill its ranks for the finishing blow, and in the meantime skirmishing in the No Man's Land between them.

The commander-in-chief of the British forces, General Sir Edward Pakenham, was now on the field, and his first idea was to prosecute siege operations against the American position. He therefore erected batteries, employing sugar hogsheads, and bombarded the American works, which included as curious an element, namely, cotton bales. The cotton took fire and the great smoke it emitted partially obscured the American field of vision; but it did stop the shot. The sugar hogsheads, on the other hand, proved no protection whatever against artillery fire, and the return fire of the American gunners wrecked the British batteries and Pakenham's scheme with it. The British commander therefore resolved to carry the position by storm.

On the eighth of January, 1815, he tried it. His idea was simple, but practical. Jackson's left was protected by an impassable swamp, but his right rested on the river. To protect it, he had erected on the opposite shore a redoubt, manned by Kentucky and Louisiana troops under General Morgan. Pakenham's plan was to attack this post first, and from it to enfilade Jackson's line as the main frontal attack was being delivered.

But he wrecked his own plan. Colonel Thornton, who was to attack Morgan, found the going slow on the right bank, and Pakenham, on the left, lost patience and attacked without waiting for him. The result was a massacre. The western riflemen might not be able to meet the veterans of the Peninsular campaign on open ground, but behind earthworks—all the cotton bales had been hastily taken out after the bombardment a few days before—with a steady rest for their rifles, they could cut a British line to ribbons with appalling speed and certainty. Pakenham's army simply marched out and died without getting within effective striking distance of their foe. Incidentally, Pakenham died with it. After the splendid columns had sunk to the earth, most of them never to rise again, Thornton arrived at his position on the west bank, struck Morgan, and hurled him half-way to New Orleans. The Kentuckians and Louisianans on whom Jackson had relied were utterly smashed. But it was then too late, for Pakenham was dead and the main British force smashed as badly as Morgan's division. So Thornton turned around and marched back, while the British General Lambert collected the remnants of the wrecked army, and withdrew to the fleet. Jackson was in no position to prevent the withdrawal, for at the beginning of the fight he had only 5,500 effectives against 10,000 British; and after the latter had lost 2,500 men they still out-numbered

him and if he had emerged from his earthworks might have beaten him. So he stood quietly by and let them go.

Besides, the work was done. In fact, as was always the case with anything Jackson did, it was overdone. There was no need for him to defend New Orleans at all, because a treaty of peace had been signed two weeks before the battle of New Orleans and the American riflemen were cutting down the troops of a technically friendly power.

However, if Jackson did not really save the city, he saved something infinitely more important, namely, the self-respect of the country. After three years of calamity and disgrace, here at last was victory with honor. An American force had met a larger British force and had beaten it, fairly and squarely. Every nation has some bad generals, who will lose it an army and a campaign, now and then. But as the War of 1812 dragged to its dismal end, Americans were apparently faced with the intensely humiliating necessity of having to admit that their generals were all bad. Harrison, indeed, could beat a horde of naked savages, and even a mixed force of British and Indians; but he was the best we had to offer on January 7, 1815. It was not proved that there lived a single American officer who could stand up against a British regular officer commanding regular troops. But January 8 proved that one man could stand up. Andrew Jackson craved no

favors. Andrew Jackson could face the troops that broke Napoleon—more, he could give them odds of two to one and beat them.

To a country that had almost completely lost faith in itself, to a country that had almost learned to cringe, this news came like a reprieve to a man upon the gallows. It was literally crazed with joy, and in its delirium it flung the name of Andrew Jackson against the stars. Without a thought of satire it began to compare him with Cæsar, with Alexander, with Napoleon. With all its soul it burned to give him honors that should surpass any that Rome ever conferred upon a returning conqueror. Not for beating the British, but for restoring to America her belief in herself when she had almost lost heart, she adored him.

That is, the plain people who make up the population of America adored him. Eminent gentlemen who knew what they wanted also regarded him highly, for he had saved another thing, namely, the Virginia Dynasty. The Federal Union had been in existence for twenty-six years, during twenty-two of which the Virginia Dynasty had ruled it undisturbed. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison had each been elected for eight years to the Presidency. One rank outsider, John Adams, had indeed broken in for a single term, but since he had been incontinently thrown out of the window there had been no serious threat to the Dynasty, and

until this wretched war began the Heir Apparent, James Monroe, had no real reason to worry about his accession. But the conduct of the war had been terribly damaging to the prestige of the Dynasty and had it closed in unrelieved gloom the demand for a national house-cleaning might have become irresistible. But instead it closed in a burst of glory, and Secretary of War Monroe could feel that the precedent which decreed that the State of Virginia should furnish the President would be followed, after all.

On the other hand, other eminent gentlemen, who also knew what they wanted, found this burst of skyrockets unnecessary and vexatious. Sour New England, willing to ruin what she could not rule, had become almost amiable as the Virginia Dynasty floundered into deeper and deeper trouble. Surely, after this calamitous war the country would turn away from Virginia to its rightful ruler, New England. With grim satisfaction the Puritans saw descending night grow blacker and blacker over the Cavaliers' heads. And then, just when it seemed that the last ray of light was permanently extinguished and James Madison must go out in Cimmerian gloom, this wild westerner, with his idiotic battle after peace had been declared, split the blackness with his mortars and bombs, streaked the sky with rockets, illumined a bewildered and apprehensive President with the reflection of his glory and caused a darkling

Administration suddenly to appear all spangled with stars!

It was annoying. It was an intolerable nuisance. The Federalist press went to work to discover something with which to dim the radiance that shone from New Orleans. Soon it was snouting among the garbage of the campaign. It dragged out the mouldering corpse of John Woods. It dragged out the corpses of the six mutineer militiamen. Then it found juicier morsels, for during the terrible days when the armies were skirmishing in No Man's Land Governor Claiborne, misconstruing an order of General Jackson, had turned the Louisiana legislature out of doors. Furthermore, Jackson refused to raise martial law until he was sure of the ratification of the peace treaty, and the news was slow in coming. A citizen of the city wrote a bitter complaint to the newspapers, and was arrested. He appealed to Federal Judge Dominick A. Hall, who issued a writ of *habeas corpus;* but when the writ was served upon Jackson, instead of obeying it, he clapped the judge in the guardhouse and later sent him five miles beyond the city and turned him loose. This was only two days before the arrival of official news of peace.

Here was a scandal indeed! Jackson had beaten the British, to be sure, but what was that to counterbalance the crimes of turning out the legislature, maintaining martial law, arresting citizens and chasing a Federal

Judge out of his own city? The Federalist press was soon baying upon the trail.

They did not see an omen in the bonfires that lighted all the Mississippi Valley. They did not read the signs displayed before them in New York, roaring acclaim to Jackson, in Pennsylvania, maddened with delight, in processions and parades and orations, in the salutes of cannon and the thunder of crowds all up and down the Atlantic coast and back to the mountain ranges that shut off the light of the Mississippi bonfires.

They regarded Andrew Jackson merely as a nuisance. Apparently to no man among them did it occur that this popularity gave him a weapon that made him the most sinister figure that had ever risen before their eyes.

CHAPTER XV

How a Lover Celebrated his Lady by Saying Nothing.

DOWN to New Orleans, when the shooting was over, came Rachel, with Andrew, Jr., then seven years old. The Creole ladies received a shock. Rachel was the backwoods incarnate. When the famous General Jackson first appeared in their city, they had half expected to see something resembling the Wild Man of Borneo in a circus sideshow. Instead, they had seen merely a grizzled, leathery, hard-bitten man who had little to say and said it in few words; whose manners, as Fanny Kemble remarked years afterward, were "perfectly simple and quiet, and, therefore, very good;" but who also possessed, on occasion, a certain grace that enchanted women. When he first met Cora Livingston, wife of the aide-de-camp, she was in a group of Creole belles, and his simple, but perfectly correct, greeting, his grave, unostentious politeness and his calm, but unassuming manner captivated that thorough woman of the world and her cortège as well. From that moment Jackson was a success among the ladies of New Orleans.

But with Rachel it was different. Society, indulgent

to an able man, is relentless toward his wife. Everyone realized that a man who had spent his life fighting the wilderness, the Indians, the Spanish and the British, had had no opportunity, if he had the desire, to learn the manners of a courtier. Too much courtliness in such a man would, indeed, have been regarded with disfavor. It would have spoiled him.

In justice the same reasoning ought to apply to that man's wife, but it is seldom so applied. The scars that the same battles have inflicted upon them both in him are regarded as honorable, in her as ridiculous. Jackson's coarse homespun was dignified garb for the frontiersman; Rachel's appeared unseemly. The tan that Jackson had acquired in his campaigns excited admiration. The tan that Rachel had acquired struggling with his deserted plantation in order that the soldier might go to the wars with a quiet mind, excited mirth. Jackson's mistakes in orthography drew forth the reflection that, after all, he spelled better than George Washington did. Rachel's failure to acquire in a frontier town all the graces of Paris was apparently held inexcusable. The fact that Jackson was a true man got him honor and praise all over the world. The fact that his wife was a true woman got her nothing.

That is, it got her nothing from what is, for some inscrutable reason, known as society. Parton reprints two comments upon her written by society people, one

Jackson at New Orleans

a man, the other a woman. These are not the putrescence later vomited upon her name by ordinary political buzzards of the newspaper press. They are of a different order—comments presumably realistic by people of education professing friendship for her. There is nothing obscene about them. They are merely hateful. They do not slander. They only sneer. Through every paragraph there runs, under the main theme as a sort of contrapuntal melody the spitting of the cat. Every line is the mark of feline claws.

But Cora Livingston was not a society woman of that type. She was not allied to the clan of Livingston for nothing. She really knew the world, not merely the society of New York and New Orleans, but men and women in the large. Her polish was based upon her own fine grain, not upon a thin veneer; and she held her leadership of society because her personal charm was reinforced by keen intelligence.

Therefore when Rachel went to her quite simply and asked her aid and advice in the new and strange situation, Cora Livingston was captivated again. She could not, it is true, convert the dumpy, hopelessly countrified Rachel into a *grande dame;* but she could, and she did, devote herself exclusively to the visitor's service, she could advise and assist her in innumerable ways, she could summon the *élite* of the city to her house and present Rachel to them in a setting that gave the ladies

of New Orleans a chance to see and to appreciate the splendid qualities of the woman. In consequence, regardless of the sneers of the cads and climbers, with the real aristocracy of the ancient town, the queer little woman from Tennessee was also a success.

But the magnificent part of Rachel's visit to New Orleans is the fact that the General marched through the midst of this feminine campaign serenely unaware that anything was going on! He noted, of course, that Mrs. Livingston was gracious to Rachel and that Rachel liked her; and no doubt that raised the value of Mrs. Livingston's husband in his eyes in later years when offices and honors were to be distributed. But that Mrs. Livingston had done anything in particular for Rachel he apparently never guessed.

Why should she do anything? There was nothing the matter with Rachel that the General could see. Even the spiteful screeds that Parton quotes bear testimony to this. Both remark with amusement upon the obvious blindness of the General to any defect in his wife. But such laughter is the inevitable cackle of fools in the presence of anything fine. Here was a tribute that Guinevere never won, a compliment never paid to Iseult, a prize finer than the golden apple that fell at Helen's feet. Rachel had made a man love her so well that nothing could release him from her power,

not even the ravages that time had worked upon her beauty.

Superficially, it seems preposterous to mention Rachel of Nashville in the same breath with the glamorous women of legend and history. The years had dealt spitefully with her, as they do with a soldier's wife; while her man was away at the wars her days had been filled with toil and her nights with anxiety. Not merely the house and the dairy knew her, but the cotton fields, the corn fields, the byres and stables and paddocks knew her well. The winds buffeted her. The sun scorched her. But that which her man had intrusted to her, she kept well. Her skin was roughened and tanned, her hands grew calloused, her once lissome figure gradually slumped into shapelessness. But her household prospered. Her husband suffered nothing by reason of waste or indolence.

He had been suffering hardships, but also gaining glory in the world. She must have been more—or less—than woman if she had no moments of trepidation when news came back from him. He had smashed the Indians. He had smashed the Spaniards. He had smashed the British army. He had saved New Orleans and that rich and splendid city lay at his feet. Famous men crowded to salute him. Beautiful women contended for the honor of paying him their intoxicating homage. Once he had loved Rachel, but Rachel once

had been graceful and gay and young. Now she was old and dowdy and fat. Would she shame him, when she appeared in that glittering capital and he saw her among the lovely women who were its pride?

Well, she came. She appeared with him at the grand ball at the Exchange, when the delivered city paid its farewell tribute to its defender and all its wealth, beauty and distinction crowded the place; and it was perfectly clear that he saw her nothing less beautiful than the most beautiful woman there.

What a triumph for Rachel! And what eloquence in her lover was his obliviousness! Songs can be sung with the lips only. Poems can be written from the head and with a heart untouched. But when a woman's lover is blind to her flaws, she is loved indeed.

Andrew Jackson doubtless never saw a ballade and didn't know a sonnet from a sight draft. His taste in music ran to appalling hymns, full of hell and damnation, and he knew no more of the language of flowers than he did of Sanskrit. But where is the troubadour who has paid his lady a compliment more tremendous than his simple inability to comprehend that there might be lovelier ladies than the one by his side? Rachel knew it. Any woman would know it. And his blank obliviousness must have been, to her, delicate and lovely verse, must have sung in her heart music that made the best efforts of the orchestra at the ball seem harsh and dis-

cordant by comparison, must have blossomed in her memory like flowers rarer than any grown on earth.

The dancers smiled, doubtless not without reason. But what of it? Rachel could afford to smile, too.

CHAPTER XVI

How General Jackson Came to Hate Henry Clay.

TWENTY-FOUR days after the news of peace arrived General Jackson went home. In the meantime he had been the recipient of many honors and two rebukes. The legislature of Louisiana passed a series of resolutions warmly thanking every high-ranking officer in the army with one exception, namely, the commander-in-chief. Federal Judge Hall returned to the city raving, summoned General Jackson before the bar and fined him a thousand dollars for contempt of court, which the General paid.

Then came the return to Tennessee and the inevitable collapse. The frightful punishment to which he had for months subjected his debilitated physical frame was bound to result in an appalling reaction. As in the campaign against the Creeks, so at New Orleans, Jackson had been going on will-power alone, and when he got back to the Hermitage he crumpled. His stomach revolted, his nerves were jangled, his old wounds inflamed, his whole system momentarily collapsed, and for four months it was all he could do to drag himself about the farm.

But in the autumn he was sufficiently recovered to proceed to Washington to confer with the authorities in the War Department. He had decided to retain his commission in the regular army and had been assigned to command of the Southern district, Major General Jacob Brown taking the Northern. Jackson was accordingly ordered to Washington to give his opinion upon the necessary measures of defense in his district. There he came into rather intimate contact with James Monroe and conceived a warm personal friendship for that amiable, if somewhat ineffectual, gentleman.

Rumors of a new Indian outbreak brought him hurrying back. They proved to be groundless, but Jackson proceeded to negotiate new treaties with the tribes, definitely clearing the ground between Nashville and the Gulf of Mexico and leaving a broad strip of white man's land between the Indians along the Mississippi River and the Indians in Florida. Incidentally, he had to go over some ground that he had already covered, for when he made his first treaty with the Creeks, after the battle of Horseshoe Bend, he had summarily rejected the claims of the Cherokees to part of the land. The Cherokees thereupon appealed to Washington, and the then Secretary of War, William H. Crawford, reversed Jackson's ruling and allowed the claims. So Jackson had to make the treaty all over again, and the necessity gave him a decided distaste for Secretary

Crawford—a circumstance that should be remembered in view of what happened later.

There followed eighteen months of comparative peace. That is to say, the battles of the period were fought without bloodshed against foes of his own nationality. But any realistic consideration of Jackson's physical state at this time must reveal the rank impossibility of his keeping a profound peace with the world. His shattered constitution was still struggling against the effects of his wounds and his terrific labors in the War of 1812. The chances are that he was loaded with pus cells, and certainly his blood swarmed with streptococci, tubercle bacilli, and malarial plasmodia. To expect tolerance, calm judgment and genial good nature of a man in such condition is to expect a miracle. Jackson was full of poisons and they made themselves manifest in a poisonous temper. He never recovered entirely. The rest of his life was spent under the handicap of maladies characteristic effects of which are a sour temper and deep-rooted pessimism. No real understanding of Jackson is possible without taking into account this factor.

Early in 1816 some idiot in the War Department began sending orders direct to Jackson's subordinates without reference to him. It was a shocking breach of military courtesy and a direct incitation to insubordination, but the proper course on the commanding general's part

would have been a remonstrance, then, if necessary, a resignation. The remarkable thing is that Jackson pursued the proper course, at first. He wrote a remonstrance to President Monroe on the day he was inaugurated, and waited forty-nine days for an answer—that is, nine days beyond the time in which he might expect an answer. But then, instead of resigning, he issued an order to his division prohibiting officers from obeying any order that did not come through him. General Winfield Scott, when he heard of it, remarked that the order was mutinous; which it was, although it was not General Scott's duty to criticise it. When kind friends bore the tale back to Jackson, he wrote Scott a furious letter and challenged him to fight, which Scott sensibly refused to do. Then Jackson perversely published the correspondence, unable to comprehend the asininity of his own part in it, and the two officers remained estranged for several years.

A little later a Kentucky historian, swelling with local pride, published a book in which General Adair was apparently made to say that Jackson had acknowledged finally that Morgan's Kentuckians, who had run away at New Orleans, were really valiant heroes. Adair in reality had attributed no such views to Jackson. The whole thing was a blunder on the part of the historian. But before it could be explained Jackson had published articles in which he fairly blistered the historian, Adair,

and the Kentucky militia. As it happened, Adair was a sturdy controversialist himself and besides in this instance he had the facts on his side; so he opened upon the bilious general with grape, canister, round shot, shell and small arms, and swept him from the field.

But the pathogenic bacteria which swarmed in Jackson's system are enough to account for both these wild outbursts, especially since neither exhibits any internal evidence of being the result of an intellectual process. What is really remarkable is the fact that at this same time he wrote to President-elect Monroe a series of letters so moderate, wise and statesmanly that they might serve as a text-book for youths aspiring to enter the public service. One of them has become famous, especially its closing words:

> The chief magistrate of a great and powerful nation should never indulge in party feelings. His conduct should be liberal and disinterested, always bearing in mind that he acts for the whole and not a part of the community. By this course you will exalt the national character, and acquire for yourself a name as imperishable as monumental marble. Consult no party in your choice; pursue the dictates of that unerring judgment which has so long and so often benefitted our country and rendered conspicuous its rulers. These are the sentiments of a friend. They are the feelings—if I know my own heart—of an undissembled patriot.

The world has long regarded that as delicious, coming from Andrew Jackson; but it really represented his ideal. If he failed to translate his ideal into accomplishment, that is the common fate of humanity. When he wrote those words it had never occurred to him that he would ever be called upon to make them good. Even as late as 1821, five years after the date of this letter, when he saw his name mentioned in a New York newspaper as a possible candidate, he cast the paper down in disgust, snorting:

"Do they think that I am such a damned fool as to think myself fit for President of the United States? No, sir; I know what I am fit for. I can command a body of men in a rough way; but I am not fit to be President."

He certainly wasn't fit to establish the ideal he described to President Monroe; but then neither was any other of the thirty-one gentlemen who have occupied the office with the possible exception of George Washington, who was never put to the test since his was not a partisan election.

But General Jackson was soon to have a chance to vent upon less worshipful objects than Generals of the United States Army the high moral indignation that a queasy stomach continually generated within him. The Seminole Indians were making trouble along the Georgia border; or, perhaps, were merely returning with usury the trouble that the Georgians were making for them.

At any rate, there were high times along the border—shootings and scalpings and burnings without end, incessant appeals to Washington and Havana, charges and counter-charges, ambuscades, raids, massacres and all the attendant phenomena of border warfare. At last the Major-General commanding the Southern district was ordered to go down and take charge of the situation himself.

The Seminoles were a sort of ethnological wastebasket for the Indian tribes. If an Indian wasn't anything else, then he was a Seminole. The tribe had incorporated so many individuals of other tribes that it had long ceased to have any distinct individuality of its own. For example, the survivors of the Creek nation who had escaped from Jackson into Florida were absorbed and apparently were thenceforth indistinguishable by white men from other Seminoles. Since so many of them were fugitives for one reason or another, it was naturally a restless and uneasy group, incorrigible fishers in troubled waters. Under the feeble governance of Spain the Seminoles did pretty much as they pleased; and as a matter of fact the settlers in lower Georgia imitated them in that. When two vigorous, restless, arrogant peoples live side by side, neither under strong government control, collisions are as inevitable as sunrise.

Jackson understood the situation perfectly, and he

saw the only possible remedy—to drive one group or the other clear out of the disputed territory and put it under rigid military control. Since there was no question of driving the Georgians out of their own State, the Seminoles must go. But they inhabited Spanish territory. They could easily be driven out of Georgia, but that would not solve the difficulty. To insure permanent peace they had to be cleared out of all that region. But the government could not order an invasion of Spanish territory, for that would be an act of war. Therefore Jackson conceived an idea. Let the government merely give him a wink, and he would do the work without orders.

So before he received his directions to proceed to Georgia he wrote a confidential note to the President of which this is the crucial paragraph:

> The executive government have ordered, and, as I conceive, very properly, Amelia Island to be taken possession of. This order ought to be carried into execution at all hazards, and simultaneously the whole of East Florida seized, and held as indemnity for the outrages of Spain upon the property of our citizens. This done, it puts all opposition down, secures our citizens a complete indemnity, and saves us from a war with Great Britain, or some of the continental powers, combined with Spain. This can be done without implicating the government. *Let it be signified to me through any channel* (*say Mr. J. Rhea*) *that the possession of the Floridas would be*

desirable to the United States, and in sixty days it will be accomplished.

An outrageous proposal, a low, dishonest, cynical proposal, no doubt, but highly practical statecraft, nevertheless. Mr. Monroe later stated that the letter arrived while he was sick and he didn't read it, although he handed it to Mr. Calhoun, who merely said that it related to the proposed expedition against the Seminoles and would require an answer. But General Jackson said that he presently received a letter from John Rhea, a representative in Congress from Tennessee, saying that the President had stated to Rhea that he approved of the suggestions in General Jackson's confidential note. Rhea testified that he wrote such a letter, and General Overton testified that he saw it. Yet James Monroe was not the man to tell a point-blank lie about such a matter. One is inclined to believe that he and Rhea must have had some sort of conversation in which each completely misunderstood what the other was talking about. But according to Monroe John C. Calhoun saw the letter and therefore he must have understood what was in Jackson's mind.

At any rate, Jackson moved quickly to the Florida border under the impression that the government wished him to clean up the mess in the most expeditious and thorough manner possible. He collected a force of Tennessee and Kentucky volunteers and a body of friendly

Indians, and swiftly broke the feeble resistance of the Seminoles. But he found evidence that confirmed his old belief that the Seminoles were being instigated to attack the Americans by foreign agents, Spanish and British. Colonel Nichols, the scatter-brained Irishman who had commanded the British force that Jackson chased out of Pensacola in the War of 1812, seems to have regarded himself as a sort of divinely appointed liberator of the Indians. He made a treaty with them, although he had not the slightest authority for doing so, left large quantities of arms and ammunition among them, and in general strove to implant in them the belief that England was their natural friend and protector against the Americans. The Spanish governors had gone further. They had received fugitive Indians into their forts and fortified towns, and had actually extended protection to parties known to be guilty of massacring American settlers. To Jackson it seemed plain that the Indians would not remain subdued as long as they had any confidence in the power of Spain and England to protect them against the United States.

Therefore, having brushed the Indians aside, he proceeded to assail the prestige of Spain and England. He seized the Spanish fort of St. Mark's. Then on his way back he swept down again upon the town of Pensacola, seized it, and when the Governor fled to Fort Barrancas, at the mouth of the harbor, he bombarded the fort and

forced it to surrender. He also captured an Englishman named Ambrister and a Scotchman named Arbuthnot. Ambrister was a filibuster who had commanded parties of hostile Indians. Jackson had him shot. Arbuthnot was a peaceful trader, who had, probably inadvertently, given warning to the Seminole chief, Boleck, known to history as Billy Bowlegs, of the approach of American troops. Jackson had him hanged.

These executions were atrocities, not to be defended on any moral grounds whatever. The only justification for them is that they did the work. When Ambrister was shot and Arbuthnot hanged every Seminole in Florida realized that reliance on the protection of England was utter folly, for England could not even save her own people, much less Seminole warriors, from the vengeance of the terrible American. The influence of British agents upon the Indians was utterly demolished. The neck of British prestige was broken, and that particular menace threatened the border no longer. The same object, as regards Spain, was accomplished when St. Mark's was seized without resistance and Fort Barrancas reduced by artillery fire.

Jackson received his orders January 11, but raising troops, equipping them, moving them to the banks of the Apalachicola and provisioning them for a campaign took until March 26. On May 24 Fort Barrancas surrendered. Rhea had given him the word. The gov-

ernment, as he understood it, had winked, and the Floridas were seized in fifty-nine days from the time the campaign really opened.

But what an apple-cart he had upset! The Seminoles did not matter, but London, Madrid and Havana were buzzing like so many nests of angry hornets. John Quincy Adams was Secretary of State and the only man intimately connected with the affair who was wholly blameless, for he did not even dream of the existence of the Rhea letter. It was years before he found out about it. But he was an Adams, and whatever else may be said of that clan, they were sturdy citizens. So when the diplomatic storm burst upon his devoted head he stood up manfully, although he had had no hand in turning loose the wild General in Florida, and therefore had a better right to complain than any other.

But Adams' theory was that when a General has won an important advantage, the business of the diplomatists of his country is to consolidate the advantage, not to quarrel with the General. He therefore undertook to soothe the raging chancellories. President Monroe stood with the Secretary of State, but Calhoun, Secretary of War, was bitter. He favored court-martialing Jackson. Crawford, Secretary of the Treasury, was disinclined to meddle with a matter that he regarded as affecting mainly the Departments of War and of State; but since there was no love lost between him and Jack-

son, he did not regard with disfavor Calhoun's desire for disciplinary measures. Adams and Monroe carried the day, however, and the Cabinet resolved to praise General Jackson, although not accepting responsibility for his war on Spain.

The Cabinet, though, did not constitute the sole voice of the Government. There was Congress to be heard from, and the Speaker of the House at the moment had small reason to love James Monroe. That leader was Henry Clay, of Kentucky, a perpetual candidate for President, perpetually thrust aside. He had had aspirations to the Secretaryship of State, then regarded as the ante-chamber to the Presidency; but John Quincy Adams had been chosen, instead. Obviously, if Mr. Clay were not to be continually shoved into the background, it behooved him to make an impression on the Administration—to prove to it that he was not the sort of man to be treated with disdain. He had begun to make himself disagreeable some time earlier, and this business of General Jackson and the Florida campaign seemed a Heaven-sent opportunity for a smashing hit.

Clay certainly knew little about the history of the campaign, and apparently he knew less about the General. The wild man from Tennessee seemed to him merely a convenient thong with which to lash the Administration. As to what might happen to the thong in the process, he was supremely indifferent. But he

would have acted with more discretion had he picked up a live and highly irritated rattlesnake with which to whip his enemy. Henry Clay, as a presidential candidate, committed political suicide one day in January 1819 when, the House being in Committee of the Whole, and the Speaker therefore out of the chair, he rose and delivered a long harangue, filled with gross errors of fact as regards the events leading up to the Seminole war, but filled also with fiery declamation about military chieftains, studded with references to Cæsars and Alexanders and Bonapartes and Cromwells and other eminent individuals not regarded exactly as safeguards of the people's liberties, and closing with a dramatic assertion that to vote thanks to Jackson would be a triumph of insubordination, militarism, anti-Constitutionalism and other evils too numerous to mention.

The House understood the speech perfectly and voted in favor of Jackson. But Jackson didn't understand it at all. He had been a member of the House himself, and a member of the Senate, too; but so little had his experience profited him that when Clay called him by inference a Cæsar, Alexander, Cromwell and Bonaparte all rolled into one, he believed that Clay meant it. Jackson's single-hearted devotion to the Republic gave him what he thought was a trustworthy clue to Clay's sentiments. Had he, Jackson, encountered a man whom he believed to be a menace to the nation, he would have

hated that man with all the strength of his nature. He would have loathed him and shrunk from contact with him as from the touch of a leper. Well, here was Clay telling the world that Jackson was man of that type. Instantly there sprang up within him a hatred of Clay that was to wax with the passage of the years until it became one of the archetypes of hatred, a sort of monument and standard of comparison by which other hatreds were measured for a generation.

The Rhea letter shows that Jackson realized that he was risking blame, when he invaded Spanish territory. He expected to have the fury of Spain and Britain vented upon him. If this expedition had failed and he had been captured, he was prepared for the worst—even for being hanged as a filibuster by the Spanish Governor. These risks he regarded as the inevitable risks of war, and he assumed them cheerfully. Nor was he much disturbed over the Cabinet's disavowal of his acts. In the Rhea letter he had invited that disavowal. But he was disgusted when Pensacola and St. Marks were returned to Spain, and he was infuriated when a faction in Congress undertook to censure him. The fact that he was merely being used as a club with which to belabor James Monroe only envenomed the insult.

He rushed to Washington, and it was on this occasion that Senators heard that it was his pleasant intention to take off their ears, and believed the report. But the

resolutions of censure were beaten in the House and in the Senate clever tacticians prevented their consideration until too late for action. So the General proceeded to take a pleasure trip through the North believing, and mentioning the belief, that the conspiracy against him was led by Clay in Congress and by Crawford in the Cabinet. He believed that Crawford might have carried the day against him in the Cabinet had not his noble friend, Calhoun, stood with Monroe and Adams; so one of his favorite toasts on this trip became, "John C. Calhoun: an honest man's the noblest work of God!"

His reception on the northern trip was tremendous. Certain discontented gentlemen took note of the popular enthusiasm and began to wonder if it might not be made to serve purposes they had much at heart. Indeed, they had been noting it for four years already. As far back as November, 1816, a retired politician in New York wrote his son-in-law outlining with uncanny precision how Jackson's popularity might be made useful. The writer was Aaron Burr, and a dozen years later men who had never read them carried out his suggestions almost to the letter.

CHAPTER XVII

How General Jackson, Thinking His Career Closed, Went Home to Die.

NO more enemies, foreign or domestic, presenting themselves, General Jackson went back to Nashville to put the finishing touches on his new mansion on the Hermitage farm. He considered his days numbered and built the house for Rachel, not expecting to inhabit it himself, for his physical infirmities increased steadily and his strength appeared to ebb. He had begun it in 1819, just after his return from the Seminole campaign. It was regarded as one of the grandest mansions in the State at the time, although the French officers who accompanied Lafayette during his visit there in 1825 were rather sniffish. It struck them as an extraordinarily plain and simple dwelling for a famous man.

Jackson found himself restless as a soldier in time of peace. Negotiations for the transfer of Florida were proceeding with irritating slowness, and finally the commander of the Southern district definitely asked that his resignation be accepted as soon as the transfer was effected and the danger of invasion from that quarter

permanently removed. Eventually the thing was done, and then President Monroe accepted Jackson's resignation from the army, only to give him immediate appointment as Governor of Florida. "Never seek and never decline office." Jackson had laid down the rule for himself years earlier, and he stuck to it. There is every reason to believe that all he really desired in this world was a chance to retire to the Hermitage and end his days in peace; but two motives impelled him to accept the Governorship. One was the maxim quoted above, reinforced by the fact that the President who summoned him to duty was his true friend as well as his superior officer. The other was that the appointment seemed to afford an opportunity to perform services to a number of his own supporters in the way of appointments to minor places.

But this last project was defeated because the President himself filled nearly all the minor offices as well as the Governorship. Jackson therefore assumed office in rather an ill humor, which did not improve as time passed. Many causes contributed to his increasing dislike of his position. His stomach was still in a state of mutiny. His old wounds troubled him. Not even yet could he bear for any length of time the weight of an epaulette on the shoulder Jesse Benton had shattered. The climate was hot, the mosquitoes were many, and Rachel had turned Presbyterian.

The connection between this last fact and the Governor's discomfort in Pensacola, his seat of government, may require explanation. The religion of the frontier, like every other phase of its life, was strong. Reference has already been made to Peter Cartwright, the famous Methodist, but he had many worthy rivals in other sects, especially in the Presbyterian. Presbyterianism remains to this day rather an austere cult, but a modern Presbyterian seems almost an Antinomian by comparison with the men who founded his faith in the wilderness. But to Rachel, child of the frontier, their rules of faith and practice were not in the least appalling and her husband, while abjuring the faith himself, treated its representatives with the profoundest respect.

On the Hermitage grounds he built a church for Rachel; and the clerics who frequented the house found him a courteous and hospitable host on all occasions.

At Pensacola he went further. The population of the place was predominantly Spanish, with a few French, and they had the Latin conception of Sunday. It horrified Rachel and she communicated her sense of outrage to her husband; whereupon the new Governor slapped upon Pensacola a set of Blue Laws fit to win the warm commendation of Jonathan Edwards. The hatred with which the town rewarded this indication of care for its spiritual state can be imagined by anyone

who has witnessed the feeling aroused elsewhere by efforts to regulate morals by law.

Finally, just before the Spanish Governor, Colonel Cavalla, was to withdraw, a complainant came in with a story that Cavalla was about to take away certain documents relative to a suit then pending in the civil courts. For forty years Jackson had clung tenaciously to the theory that all Spaniards are treacherous, and it is more than probable that his liver had well-nigh ceased functioning altogether by this time. More than that, the story was true, for Cavalla did have the documents, although he said, probably truly, that he had inadvertently included them in his baggage, not realizing their nature. At any rate, there was a terrific explosion. Cavalla spoke no English, Jackson no Spanish, and the interpreters seem to have been unusually inefficient. The Spaniard always maintained that he didn't know what the row was about; but he did know that about midnight he found himself in what he termed the *calabozo* which the Americans transcribed into calaboose, where he remained while his baggage was rifled and the papers seized.

It was an appalling insult to inflict on a Spanish gentleman bearing the commission of His Most Christian Majesty, and poor John Quincy Adams at Washington once more had to think furiously and talk fast to an indignant Ambassador. Somehow he managed to sat-

isfy the diplomatist without repudiating Jackson, but he remarked to a friend that the arrival of each southern mail terrified him; he feared the news it might bring of what Jackson was doing now.

Therefore it is safe to say that there was no weeping either in Pensacola or in the Department of State at Washington when Governor Jackson decided, in 1821, that he had had all he could stand, and resigned his office.

And so, November 3, 1821, General Andrew Jackson, being then fifty-four years old, arrived at the Hermitage having in mind only one more important step to take in this life, namely, to quit it. There is no doubt that toward death his thoughts and his steps were directed. His career was definitely closed. His health was definitely broken. There remained before him only the ordering of his worldly affairs so as to spend in peace the few years that he thought remained to him.

He retired reasonably content and with an obvious and not groundless pride in what he had accomplished in the world. The son of the immigrant linen draper had indeed come far. Without friends, or money, or influence, he had gone into the wilderness and carved out of it an estate of his own. He had commanded the respect of his neighbors by his courage, his integrity and the strength of his intelligence. He had taken part in shaping the new State and had held honorable offices

under it. He had accumulated a fortune sufficient to his needs in his declining days. Then when the sudden Indian menace rose over the State, he had been entrusted with its defense, and right manfully had he defended it. When he was through, there was a broad highway, free of enemies, from the Tennessee River to the Gulf of Mexico; and the power of the savages was finished in eastern America. Nor was that all; for when an enemy more terrible by far than all the Indians on the continent threatened the whole nation through the West, he had met and defeated that enemy, by which feat his renown was carried through the world. Finally, in Florida he had extinguished the last embers of the Indian fire, had done much to force the acquisition of Florida, and had made definitive treaties of peace with the remnants of the defeated tribes. It is not too much to say that he had completed the conquest for the United States of all the territory between the Ohio and the Gulf, and had defended his conquest against Great Britain.

This was indeed a record on which a man might rest. It was enough for Andrew Jackson, and when he returned to the Hermitage it was with every intention of living thenceforth the life of a gentleman in retirement, nursing his shattered health in the bosom of his family, and eventually going down gracefully to the grave.

The first few months after his return were devoted to this program. The plantation was in excellent shape,

thanks to the faithfulness and skill of Rachel. Andrew Jackson, Jr., was now about eleven years old. Andrew Jackson Donelson, the other nephew, was just out of West Point, a subaltern in whom a retired Major-General could take pride. Rachel was happier than she had been in years, happy beyond expression to have her man home from the wars, covered with glory, and content to remain at her side. Old friends poured in to offer felicitations and swap reminiscences. General Coffee lived near and was frequently in the house. Major Lewis, the perfect quartermaster, came too, and so did Major Eaton, now a Senator, and writing a life of the General. Dr. Bronaugh, the General's military surgeon, was often there, as were Judge Overton, General Sam Houston, as yet unknown to Texas, General Carroll and Colonel Hayne. Naturally, everybody who was anybody in Tennessee made pilgrimages to the Hermitage, and after awhile there came an old, old man, at whose advent the master of the Hermitage rose up quickly and went out to meet him and conducted him into the house reverently, feeling that a new and mighty honor came with this visitor's approach.

It was Lafayette. To him Jackson showed the pistols of Washington, which Lafayette had given his old commander, and which Washington's heirs had passed on to Jackson. Courteously the hero of the Revolution said that he was glad to find them in worthy hands, and

that is the only time it is recorded that Jackson blushed. He was not the man to reject such a compliment, but he received it well.

"Yes, I believe myself worthy of them," he exclaimed, clasping the pistols and Lafayette's hand to his breast, "if not for what I have done, at least for what I wished to do for my country."

And there were less distinguished, but not less welcome, visitors to the house in Rachel's countless nieces and nephews and grand-nieces and grand-nephews. The Hermitage was ironically named, for it rang from morning till night with youthful voices, with laughter and giddy songs. The young people adored Aunt Rachel, and if the Terror of the West grew choleric, as dyspeptics will, all they had to do was to begin singing "Scots, Wha Hae Wi' Wallace Bled" or "Auld Lang Syne" to reduce him to mild benevolence again.

And so time slipped gently by at the Hermitage, solaced with good tobacco in the evenings, Andrew pulling at a clay pipe with a long reed stem and Rachel with another on the other side of the fire; or, indeed, worse, for James Hamilton wrote, startled, "She was the first woman I ever saw smoke a cigar"; between them, then, a gray-haired Judge, perhaps, or a Senator lately returned from Washington, or a bronzed General idly reviewing old campaigns; in the background a twitter of young voices, somewhat subdued out of respect for

the elders, but punctuated by irrepressible bursts of laughter, or snatches of song.

The thunder was hushed, the wrack of storm-clouds had blown away, and level sunlight gilded the peaceful scene.

Sunset, said Andrew Jackson, thinking soberly, but without dismay, of the churchyard.

Sunrise, may say we who have the advantage of hind-sight. The disabled veteran, the scarred and shattered wreck of the battlefields, clinging feebly to a thread of life which he expected to snap at any moment, was about to begin his career.

CHAPTER XVIII

How General Jackson Became President at a Great Price.

IN Washington in 1824 things were arranged admirably, from the standpoint of those who had done the arranging. The Government of the United States had been reduced to a neat, compact little oligarchy, which ran like a well built machine, smoothly and almost noiselessly. Twenty-four years earlier the great Jefferson had not so much defeated the Federalists as obliterated them. The party never recovered from his terrific assault upon it, and after lingering along in a poor dying state for a few years it quietly passed out, and everybody, even the contemporary Adams, John Quincy, became a Jeffersonian.

But at that the party was highly exclusive because, for the purposes of practical politics, it consisted of the Administration, the members of Congress, and a few State officials. Elections were reduced to such mere formalities as were elections in South Carolina a century later—that is to say, after the party had decided upon the nominee, the excitement was over. Ratification at

the polls was a matter of course. But in 1924 there were Democratic primaries in South Carolina in which the people expressed a real choice. In 1824 the people did not participate in national politics even to that extent, for the nominee was chosen by the members of Congress assembled in Caucus. From which arose the popular saying that King Caucus ruled the country.

However, even King Caucus was not an absolute monarch, since he was bound to some extent by precedent and tradition. Virginia had supplied four of the five Presidents, which established what was known as the Virginia Dynasty. Mr. Jefferson had been Secretary of State under President Washington. Mr. Madison had been Secretary of State under President Jefferson. Mr. Monroe had been Secretary of State under President Madison. Mr. John Quincy Adams was Secretary of State under President Monroe. Hence King Caucus ruled with a respectful eye on the Virginia Dynasty, and with due deference to the Secretarial Succession.

Presidential timber, therefore, was generally considered to mean a man acceptable to a majority of the members of Congress and who had served in some high office, preferably the Secretaryship of State. Thus the choice was extremely limited, and among the handful who might legitimately cherish aspirations an accommodation could always be arranged without getting the people all stirred up by a hot campaign. Such was the Era of

Good Feeling—an arrangement neat, efficient, and highly satisfactory to those on the inside. True, it eliminated the people as a potent factor in national politics, but to the politicians on the inside that was all in its favor. They claimed Jefferson as their political father, but in much the spirit in which the Jews claim Abraham as their father—or as modern Republicans claim a later Abraham, namely, Lincoln as the founder of their faith. That is to say, the politicians of 1824 toasted Jefferson at their political dinners, and eulogized Jefferson in their political meetings, and cheered every reference to Jefferson in political speeches, but without worrying too much over whether or not Jefferson would have approved their politics.

Ever since the foundation of the government accommodating politicians have been willing and anxious to relieve the people of the fatigue, worry and perplexity of managing their government. They have invented a thousand ways of accomplishing this benevolent purpose, whether the people like it or not; and every realistic observer of public affairs must admit that their success is more than nominal. But at no period in our history has their control been more complete than when King Caucus ruled through the Virginia Dynasty and the Secretarial Succession in the Era of Good Feeling.

The weakness of the position lay, of course, in the fact, attested by Sancho Panza, that when two men ride

an ass one must ride behind. There were always more than one aspirant to every office of dignity and honor. There were always Outs. Some of them, as for example, Henry Clay, when they were cast out went no further than to form an Opposition in Congress, believing that the time would come when they might expect to become Ins. But occasionally a man would be thrown out with such power that he flew clean beyond the pale; and there were always men whose strength was considerable, yet not sufficient to secure them a foothold in Congress. These constituted a secondary Opposition, which opposed, not merely the Administration, but the whole system and King Caucus in chief.

Their number was constantly increasing, and by the year 1824 they were formidable. The common hope of this group was to break the power of King Caucus and demolish his whole system. But one of the fundamental rules of politics is the axiom that you can't beat Somebody with Nobody. The revolt needed a leader, and when the country went wild over General Andrew Jackson it was apparent that here was the man.

Among others to whom it was apparent was the Perfect Quartermaster. William B. Lewis, indeed, hardly fits into either of the groups just mentioned, for he had certainly never been one of the inner circle and therefore is not to be listed with Clay; nor had he evinced any remarkable desire to figure in national politics prior

to 1824. Indeed, there is very good reason to believe that Major Lewis began his activity in politics without expecting or desiring to get any office for himself. He seems to be a fine specimen of a rare genus, namely, the Hero-Worshipper. In every other respect his was an unusually level head; but when it came to Andrew Jackson—well, let him speak for himself:

> I assure you, I do firmly and conscientiously believe, that by nature he was not, as a military man, inferior to either Alexander, Julius Cæsar, or Napoleon Bonaparte, and had he occupied the place of either, under like circumstances, would not have been less successful or distinguished.

This was not written in the moment of exhilaration following some particularly well-fought action. It is Lewis' considered and deliberate judgment, declared when he was an old man and when Jackson had been dead fifteen years. There is no question that he believed with all his heart that Jackson was the greatest American, and perhaps he would have said the greatest man, that ever lived. Therefore when he began the campaign, which he was to prosecute for seven years, to make Jackson President of the United States, he believed that he was serving equally well his friend and his country, and the knowledge was satisfaction enough for him. When he had seen his idol inaugurated, he packed his baggage and prepared to start for Tennessee,

perfectly satisfied; and it was only at the President's request, almost in the form of a command, that he consented to stay in Washington.

Lewis is worthy of this much attention, because his attitude explains many things that might otherwise be obscure. After the campaign was well under way thousands attached themselves to it for the loaves and fishes. But the tireless heart of it, the core and strength of it, was a man who was not in it for what he could get out of it, but because he believed it patriotism of the highest type to fight for Jackson. Such a man is hard to beat and impossible to subdue.

The idea of running the General had occurred to others. Burr has been mentioned, but even before Burr wrote to Alston, Edward Livingston had suggested Jackson for President, and there was even some letter-writing. But when the General heard of the movement he laughed it out of existence.

He was still inclined to ridicule the idea in 1822, when Lewis quietly began to work; but he then thought it of relatively small importance, because at that time he hardly expected to live to see another inauguration day in any case. This time, however, it was serious, because Lewis had the endowment of a masterly politician. Although he had spent his life far away from Washington, the center of intrigue, he seemed to know instinctively how to go about the business; without instruction he

knew just which wire to pull, when to pull it, and how hard. He was quiet, deft, sure-footed. He moved so smoothly that the Great Men, who ruled the inner ring in Washington, hardly realized his existence and for a long time never guessed who was furnishing the brains for the Jackson campaign.

But as soon as he began work in earnest Lewis met a gratifying response. It was obvious, of course, that Jackson would never be President as long as King Caucus ruled, but Lewis was well aware of the wide-spread feeling in the country that His Majesty should be dethroned. So he began to enlist the disaffected element as far as he could under the Jackson banner. In 1822 the Tennessee legislature took the first public step by adopting a resolution formally presenting the name of Andrew Jackson to the country as a proper choice for President. Still Washington saw nothing ominous in that. It seemed to be merely a gracious compliment to a Favorite Son.

But a little later Fate played squarely into Lewis's hands. The Secretarial Succession had been broken. The powers had promised the nomination, not to John Quincy Adams, but to William H. Crawford, a brilliant and able Georgian, but anathema to Jackson for two reasons—first on account of the Cherokee Indian business, and second because Jackson was then under the impression that Crawford, instead of Calhoun, was the Cabinet

member who had favored his arrest after the Seminole Campaign. But there were three other gentlemen who were as little disposed as Jackson to look with favor upon the elevation of Crawford; one was Adams, who, as Secretary of State, naturally regarded himself as the Heir Presumptive; another was Clay, the perpetual candidate, who saw in Crawford's rise another shelving for four years; the third was John C. Calhoun, whose ambition burnt no less fiercely than Clay's.

Yet the prestige of the organization was strong, and without the interposition of Fate the campaign might have proceeded according to plan; but in 1823 Crawford suffered a stroke of paralysis which left him helpless, blind and hardly conscious. True, after a time he began to mend, and his friends made desperate efforts to convince the country that his condition was not really serious, but from the moment of his stroke Crawford was out of the running.

So King Caucus, by a totally unexpected development, was down, and instantly Lewis was mounted upon his prostrate form striving desperately to give him the *coup de grace.* And not Lewis alone. Friends of all the other candidates were equally vigorous in the attack. The usual fate of dynasties was upon the heirs of Jefferson—the strongest men in the country were outside the line of succession, and the succession was therefore bound to be diverted.

The Caucus did actually meet, and actually nominated Crawford; but the attendance was so pitifully small that the nomination hurt, rather than helped, his chances. One man who realized it, but who nevertheless stuck to the sinking ship, albeit with calming enthusiasm, was the rising political boss of New York State, whose name was Martin Van Buren.

After the Caucus, however, it was plain that the field was open to all comers; and then Major Lewis' campaign began to advance with giant strides. It is incorrect to say that there was a spontaneous rising of the people in favor of Jackson. There are few spontaneous occurrences in politics. Those that have the greatest semblance of spontaneity are merely those that have been most skillfully staged-managed. But there was a rising in this instance, and so admirably had it been managed that it bore all the appearance of a popular revolt. When Pennsylvania went mad over Jackson, Calhoun saw that he was out of it, and withdrew his name as a Presidential candidate, preferring to run for Vice-President.

But the campaign proved a little too short. At the finish, Lewis' candidate was running magnificently, gaining on the field with every day, and had the election been postponed six weeks or two months he might have been clear ahead; but as it was, there was no election. None of the four candidates had a majority of the electoral vote, and the election was therefore thrown into

the House of Representatives. The figures stood, Jackson, 99; Adams, 84; Crawford, 41; Clay, 37. Under the law, the House had to choose from the three highest, and it was obvious that the man to whom Henry Clay threw his strength was almost certain of election.

It is fairly clear, too, that the campaign had worked a great change in Andrew Jackson. From being a neutral, rather inclined to scoff, he had become a stout Jackson man. What else was to be expected of a man who loved a good horse-race? By the time the race was over, Jackson was rather excited, although he was not yet heart and soul in it. By way of supporting his other plans Lewis, the master-politician, had found it necessary in 1823 to contrive Jackson's election to the Senate. The General therefore started to Washington before the full returns were in. But he knew that he had run well, and arrived in the capital in high good humor. He was so amiable, indeed, that he even exchanged courteous greetings with Henry Clay, regardless of the "military chieftain" speech.

But when it was revealed that he had received more electoral votes than any other candidate, carried more States than any other candidate, and received a larger popular vote than any other candidate, it suddenly struck him that the affair was getting serious. Anyone could see that Jackson was more nearly than any other the choice of a majority of the people, and to Jackson

himself that seemed to be reason enough for his election by the House of Representatives.

But he was presently to realize that he was now in Washington, and what the people think is often the least of Washington's worries. It was no longer a question of whom the people wished to make President; it was a question of whom Mr. Clay wished to see in the White House. The fury of intrigue that developed in the first few weeks of 1825 is beyond description, and even a brief account of all the dealing and the dickering that took place, that is believed to have taken place, and that was reported to have taken place would fill several volumes of this size.

But in the end Mr. Clay said, Adams. So that was that.

There were two excellent reasons for Mr. Clay's selection. In the first place, poor Crawford was clearly finished, in spite of the efforts of his friends to prove the contrary. There remained, then, Adams and Jackson. Mr. Clay chose Adams for a multitude of reasons, but two are sufficient. The first was that he believed that choice better for the country; and the second was that he believed it better for Mr. Clay. The people were for Jackson, to be sure, but what did the people know about selecting a President? Mr. Clay was contemptuous, not only of the people's capacity to choose, but also of their capacity to punish him for defeating their

choice. The mass of the voters had figured but slightly in the plans of the higher strategists of politics up to that time, so why should Mr. Clay worry about them? He lacked the perspicacity to see that in Lewis he had before his eyes a new type of politician, marvelously skillful at handling the masses, adept at hurling them against men whose destruction he wished.

Therefore Mr. Clay believed himself perfectly safe in following his own natural inclinations and they all bent toward Adams. In the first place, Clay was mentally Jackson's antithesis. He could be ferocious in attack, but his inclination was against attack, and powerfully against a fight to the death. He believed that compromise was the essence of statecraft, and Jackson's type was the last that he would have wished to see in the White House. Of course he believed that Adams would make the better President.

In the second place, Mr. Clay was from Kentucky, and the West had never yet had a President. If a Tennessee man were chosen, it would have one, and since the Virginia Dynasty was obviously done for, it would be New England's turn next. To elect Jackson in 1824 would be almost to insure Adams' election in 1828 or 1832; and where would Mr. Clay come in? On the other hand, to elect Mr. Adams in 1824 would be to open the way for a western man in 1828 or at the latest in 1832. Mr. Clay doubtless believed that the wild

military chieftain would be disposed of and forgotten by that time, which would leave the way open for Mr. Clay to step gracefully into the office.

So Adams it was, and he promptly appointed Henry Clay his Secretary of State, whereupon the wild general blew up with a terrible roar.

Not that he misbehaved in Washington. On the contrary, he was among the first to congratulate the President-elect, which he did irreproachably. But he nevertheless believed that Adams had bought Clay's support with the promise of the Secretaryship of State, that is, the ante-room to the Presidency. The obvious fact that Adams had no need to buy support which the logic of events was bound to bring him anyhow did not impress Jackson in the least. Nor need it impress us. The fact remains that Clay did defeat the man the largest number of people had voted for, and that Adams gave him a high office. Viewed from the standpoint of the average politician there was nothing corrupt in the transaction; but viewed from the austere height of the standard of ethics and honor ideally supposed to be maintained among gentlemen it was questionable.

By that standard Jackson himself would hardly measure up. The proposal in the Rhea letter, for example, he would not himself have recommended as an example to be imitated in private transactions between gentlemen. But evidence of moral turpitude is always easy

to discover in the actions of those whom we dislike, and for all the polite exchanges between them at Washington, General Jackson heartily disliked Henry Clay. Therefore, when this transaction, which certainly was open to misconstruction, was consummated, Jackson misconstrued it. He had a positive genius for misconstruction, anyhow, and he gave it free rein in this case.

He returned to Tennessee. The legislature, six months after the inauguration of Adams, re-nominated Jackson. He resigned his seat in the Senate and devoted himself grimly to the task of cleaning out the rascals who had defeated the will of the people and cheated him out of the office to which he had been elected. Never seek office? No, but never decline it, either. Jackson firmly believed that he had been the real choice of the people at the late election, and to consent to the transfer of that office to another by a political bargain would be, in a sense, to decline the service to which the people called him.

By some such process of rationalization, no doubt, he justified to himself his imperious desire to hurl Adams out of office and smash Henry Clay. And, indeed, the country agreed with him. The "bargain and corruption" cry was instantaneously and immensely successful. It became more successful when the course of events revealed that, in choosing John Quincy, Clay had elected an Adams indeed, one full of the Feder-

alistic inclinations of old John Adams, the father, which baptism into the Democratic faith had not exorcised from the soul of the son. This development of a Federalist trend gave Mr. Van Buren, of New York, an opportunity to step naturally and gracefully into the opposition, which he did with speed. It gave to Senator Thomas Hart Benton, of Missouri, a fine excuse to rush back to the standard of his old commander. In order to deliver the country from a Federalist should not Senator Benton patriotically bury any personal grievance he might hold against the man who was plainly Democracy's hope? He should. He did. And he was a happy and vociferous Jacksonian from that day. It gave Vice-President Calhoun a chance to step from his own broken-down vehicle to a prominent seat on the swiftly-moving Jackson bandwagon. It gave all the astute gentlemen who understood the trend of public opinion opportunity to ally themselves with the popular party—all, that is, save one. Henry Clay was hopelessly committed to Adams.

But there were compensations. The wealth, the respectability, the learning of the country adhered to Adams. Big businesss was with him. The aristocracy was with him, with relatively few exceptions and they were confined almost entirely to the South. The D.D.'s, the Ph.D.'s and the LL.D.'s were with him to a man. Of course, where wealth, learning and respectability con-

gregate, there also the newspapers are gathered together. Taken as a whole, the Press was strongly pro-Adams. Is it any wonder, then, that as late as 1827 Daniel Webster could write to a friend, and a confidential one, that there was really no danger? When it seemed that practically every literate man in the country was for Adams, who could be against him?

But Major Lewis was against him, and now he was working with exceedingly able assistants. Edward Livingston was working both in Louisiana and through his New York connections. Very unostentatiously, but none the less effectively, old Aaron Burr was working. Up in rock-ribbed New Hampshire an editor named Isaac Hill was waging a hopeless, but tremendous, fight. In Kentucky two other members of the same tribe were as busy; their names were Amos Kendall and Francis P. Blair. At Washington Duff Green, a good Calhoun man, had thrown the *Telegraph* into the campaign. In New York Webb, of the *Courier and Inquirer*, had devoted to the campaign most of the time of one of his bright young men named James Gordon Bennett.

Most important of all, Senator Martin Van Buren, of New York, absolute in the Democratic Party now that Clinton was dead, had seen that Jackson was the only man who could hope to beat Adams. He was therefore simply holding his fire until the psychological moment. It came in 1827, and when Van Buren burst into the

open it was evident even to Daniel Webster that the woods were afire.

But when the combined intelligence, learning, dignity and wealth of the country go into action they can do a great deal in a short time. They did it in this instance. They dredged up every particle of filth in every political cesspool in America and hurled it in Jackson's face. In resorting to the cry of "bribery and corruption" the Jackson rabble, in the opinion of the learned and respectable—and, indeed, in the opinion of later generations, too—, had resorted to dirty politics, so learning and respectability set out to teach the rabble how dirty politics can really be when learned and respectable men put their minds to the task of dirtying it.

The pro-Adams press started by calling Jackson a murderer and from that it warmed up to the task of vituperation. John Binns, of Philadelphia, issued a series of eleven handbills each showing a coffin-lid bearing the name of a man Jackson had murdered, beginning with John Woods, including the six militiamen shot for desertion, and concluding with Arbuthnot and Ambrister. Then others charged Jackson with having conspired with Aaron Burr to commit treason against the United States. He was called illiterate, imbecile, drunken, lewd, avaricious, a gambler and wastrel, a liar, a homicidal maniac, a bribe-taker, a shyster, a swindler, an atheist and a slave-trader. The fact that a number of these

charges contradict each other was conveniently ignored, and the stream of foul names gushed unchecked. Then the circumstances of his marriage were dug up, and the Adams papers celebrated such an orgy of bestiality as has never disgraced the American press at any other time. No shred of decency remained. Rachel was dragged before millions of newspaper readers and pilloried as an adulteress, little if any better than a common strumpet, for no other cause than that her husband had incurred the wrath of learning and respectability.

At last one creature climbed to a height of infamy that should have made his name as immortal as Iscariot's. He printed a paragraph assailing the good name of Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson, mother of Andrew, dead fifty years and dead of ship-fever contracted while nursing soldiers of the Revolution.

This broke the iron man. When the newspaper containing the paragraph came into his hands, Andrew Jackson's defenses were shattered and his weapons fell from his grasp. He sat down and cried like a child.

No victory is worth the price that Andrew and Rachel Jackson paid for theirs in 1828. The agony of the man was that of Prometheus bound, with the vultures tearing at his vitals; but for the agony of the woman what metaphor exists? To be befouled through the length and breadth of a nation; to be exposed in her naked shame in every city and town and hamlet; to be

branded wherever she might go for all the rest of her life—this was but the beginning of her penalty. Frightful as it was, all this was easy to bear by comparison with the thought that it was through her the enemy had at last reached her man and struck him where he could not defend himself. Loyal in every fibre, she had none the less betrayed him. What honor, what position, what achievement could compensate her? None. Never again would she know peace under the sun.

A victory, though, was won. Wealth, respectability, dignity and learning went down before the phalanx of the rabble. The scavenger troops were scattered. In the electoral college John Quincy Adams was beaten by more than two to one, and the military chieftain was elected President of the United States.

CHAPTER XIX

How the Light Went Out.

ABOUT six weeks after the election Rachel died. For four or five years the condition of her heart had been causing her husband anxiety. The excitement, suspense and suffering occasioned by the campaign were as bad for a woman in her condition as anything could be, and, as the event proved, they were too much for her weakened powers of resistance. When it was proved beyond doubt that the fight had been won, she collapsed.

Poor Rachel was spared nothing. Born to hardship, danger and toil; bound to heavy, exacting labor all her life; early disillusioned, disgusted and exposed to ignominy by her first marriage; exposed to ignominy again by the mistake in her second marriage; the wife of a fighting man who was twice brought home to her half dead, and whom she had to send to the wars three times; caught at last in the collision of political forces far beyond her comprehension, much less her control, and mangled beyond hope, she was not even permitted to creep quietly into the grave. Death perhaps was not un-

welcome to the shamed and stricken woman, but he did not carry her off gently. He struck with all the brutal cruelty of an Adams newspaper.

December 17, 1828, Mrs. Jackson suffered an attack of *angina pectoris*. It was in the morning. Her husband was in the fields, and only servants were in the house. When Jackson arrived, it was to find his wife writhing in agony which was to continue, with occasional slight subsidences, for sixty hours, and which rendered her incapable of coherent speech, incapable of thought, incapable of anything but pain, and more pain, and fresh paroxysms of pain.

From Wednesday morning until Friday night Jackson did not leave her bedside for ten minutes at a time. For sixty unimaginable hours the President-elect of the United States contemplated the price of his victory and had burned into his soul the vanity of all his triumphs.

Finally, on Friday evening, Death relented for a little and out of the blind obliviousness of her pain the sufferer struggled back to a certain consciousness of her surroundings. She tried to speak. It was a frightful effort, time after time defeated. But she *must* speak. Eventually the indomitable spirit forced the racked and broken flesh to obedience, and the attendants waited to hear a prayer for death. But it wasn't that about which she had to speak. It was the General. He must not forget that the citizens of Nashville were giving a great

dinner in his honor Tuesday night. It would be fatiguing. He must get some sleep . . .

Were this incident unsupported by any other evidence, who could deny that Rachel was magnificent?

Saturday and Sunday passed, relatively free from pain. Monday the disease seemed to take a decided turn for the better, and in the evening the patient repeated her insistence that her husband must get some sleep—repeated it so emphatically that it would have been folly for him to refuse. At nine o'clock, therefore, he bade her good-night and retired to the next room, leaving her with a negro serving-woman who was supporting her while the bed was rearranged. But Jackson had barely removed his coat when his wife suddenly screamed. He rushed back into the room to find her head fallen on the serving-woman's shoulder and her heart stilled forever.

He wouldn't believe it. He couldn't believe it. Fiercely he demanded of the doctor, who was in the house, new tests, the application of new restoratives. But the evidence was complete, the fact incontestable. Late at night he surrendered and sat down to watch over her until morning came.

Nashville was in festive array that morning, gay with preparations for the great celebration in honor of her distinguished son, until a rider arrived from the Hermitage and struck the town into mourning. The bunting was then hastily exchanged for crepe and the flags

fluttered down to half-staff. And not altogether out of respect for the President-elect, either. Nashville knew its loss when Rachel Donelson Jackson died, and many who hated her husband went with sore hearts that day.

Wednesday they buried her in a corner of the Hermitage grounds and every human being within reach of the spot came to pay her tribute. But all that passed before Andrew Jackson in a blur. A face or two stood out—Hannah, the serving-woman, who had to be carried away; friend Rutledge; members of the household. People came up, shook hands, said indistinguishable things. No matter. Nothing mattered. Nothing would ever matter any more. Ah, here was Coffee, sturdy John Coffee, always at Andrew Jackson's right hand. Coffee's hand was under his elbow, Coffee's steady arm guided his footsteps. One must stand up. Andrew Jackson must stand up, while they committed his heart to earth and the finer, nobler part of his spirit to God who gave it.

Back then to the Hermitage, back to the house of hollow triumph, to the house of useless, ironical honor, back to the house whose master's victory tore him from the only spot that offered solace to his aching heart.

The love story of Andrew Jackson was over. It had passed unseen by most and uncomprehended by any. Even among men who were friendly to him it had provoked more smiles than rhapsodies, and it has been the subject for jesting down to our day. But none the less it

had provided happiness to one man and one woman because it was shot through with sacrificial devotion on both sides; and therefore it is as genuinely great as any of the glamorous love stories in which the race has taken delight since history began.

So Rachel was buried in the Hermitage grounds, and over the new-made grave one last hyena snarled. A New York newspaper suggested an epitaph for Mrs. Andrew Jackson. It was scornful and derisive.

CHAPTER XX

How President Jackson Began by Affronting Officialdom, Society and the Clergy.

THE Era of Good Feeling was most emphatically terminated when Andrew Jackson was sworn in as President of the United States, March 4, 1829. As if to emphasize the fact, the incoming President flatly refused to pay the customary courtesy visit to his predecessor. Washington was scandalized, but the fluttering of Washington society was less than nothing to the man with the broken body and the vitrified soul, the terrible old man now in the White House. The *National Journal* had been one of the foulest of all newspapers in its attacks on Rachel Jackson, and the *National Journal* was understood to be the personal organ of President Adams. Shake hands with the man who had tolerated, if he had not instigated, that villainy? Jackson would see him in hell first. Were he twenty times President of the United States, were he prophet, priest and king, were he the Twelve Apostles all rolled into one, he should have no mark of respect from the husband of Rachel Jackson.

Doubtless that was wrong, but it was very human. There is really no evidence to show that Adams had any part in precipitating the scurrility of the campaign, and there is plenty of evidence to show that he was a thoroughly decent man. But the fact remains that the villainy was perpetrated, that Adams knew it had been perpetrated, and that he did not denounce it. When Old Dog Tray runs with the sheep-killing curs and gets a kick intended for a cur, he has not much cause to complain.

Furthermore, Adams' *Diary* is a monument to his limitless capacity for thinking the worst of people. It is surely not unreasonable to believe that he followed his usual bent in this case and thought the worst of Rachel. That may account for his failure to repudiate publicly the attacks of the *National Journal* on the character of his opponent's wife; for no thorough Puritan could really disapprove the pillorying of a loose woman, regardless of circumstances. Certainly one prefers to believe that, for it is easier to forgive bigotry than to forgive apparent willingness to profit by the public flogging of a woman.

At any rate, John Quincy Adams was left to remove himself from Washington as best he could, without an acknowledgment by his successor even of his existence. No wonder the weather-wise looked confidently for storms.

More than that, there appeared in Washington with Jackson a horde of creatures that to the fastidious capital were not merely incomprehensible, but well-nigh incredible. The backwoods had boiled over and spilled into Washington. Lean, rough, unlovely frontiersmen filled the town. Muddy boots, homespun clothes and fur caps became familiar sights along the streets. Bronzed, untidy, tobacco-chewing males swarmed to the inaugural reception at the White House, stormed the doors where the waiters were ladling orange punch out of barrels, broke the glasses, spilled the punch, stood on the damask covered chairs to see the President, and in general conducted themselves in a way that horrified the socially elect, and reinforced their conviction that the end of the republic was at hand.

And, indeed, they were right. The end of the republic, as they had known it, was at hand. The republic as they had known it was a republic built on the classical model. A Roman would have understood it perfectly. It was a nation controlled by an aristocracy—elective, indeed, but none the less an aristocracy. The break with Europe had been purely political. George Washington, as the British were to discover with immense satisfaction a century later, was to the day of his death essentially an English country gentleman. John Adams was in spirit a Peer of the Realm. Madison and Monroe and the second Adams shared the social background and

the social vision of Washington. There had been but one disturbing element in the line. Thomas Jefferson, like the others, lived the life of the Squirarchy. Monticello is as obviously one of the flowers of English country life as is Strawberry Hill. But Jefferson was not the ruddy beef-eater. He was sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. He was tainted with intellectuality. Almost alone among the men of his time he foresaw the inevitable dissolution of the spiritual bond, once the political bond was cut. He realized the futility of hoping to maintain an English society in the absence of an English polity.

A republic on the Roman plan, that is, an oligarchy, was quite consonant with English society. In fact, that has been essentially the English form of government since 1832. But English society was, and is, relatively stable. Jefferson, being able to see beyond the boundaries of Washington, realized that American society was becoming the most unstable in the world. In a country in which man-power was scarce the masses of the people would inevitably count for more than they did in crowded Europe. So Jefferson saw that the only possible trend of development in America lay in the direction of democracy.

Being almost pathologically optimistic, he trumpeted his prophecy to the world not merely as the ruthless logic of the situation, but as a great desideratum. Democ-

racy, he asserted, was not only inescapable; it was also the promise of the future, the hope of mankind, the ordinance of God. All this was naturally pleasant in the ears of the common people, and Jefferson became their prophet; then when stupid and maladroit leadership led the Federal Party to suicide, Jefferson became everybody's prophet.

Up to 1828 he had been a highly satisfactory prophet, because none of his major prophecies had as yet come true. Therefore gentlemen who had no more real faith in democracy as a guide to the good life than they had in umbilical contemplation, nevertheless were happy and contented Jeffersonians. Why not whoop for democracy, so long as the Better Element remained securely in control?

But, unfortunately for his professed disciples, Jefferson really was a sound prophet. His own materialization of democracy was, indeed, only an oozy ectoplasm, which nobody really feared. But fifty years later the thing actually came to life, and a horrible apparition it was to the gentry who, throughout the Era of Good Feeling, had been proclaiming their devotion to it. From Washington to Jackson every President had seen European service before being called to the White House. They all were familiar with European culture and understood European thought. They were all scholarly enough to have some notion of the classical idea of a

republic; some of them sympathized with it, and to none, not even to Jefferson, was it abhorrent. But now America had turned her back squarely upon the Atlantic and had chosen a President out of the backwoods, mentally and spiritually as non-European as if he had come from the Congo jungle, or from under the shadow of the Himalayas. And the first manifestation of his power showed that the Better Element was sunk without leaving a trace.

That first manifestation was the selection of a Cabinet in which, out of all the potent influences that had swayed Washington for years, only that of Calhoun survived. At the head of it was Martin Van Buren, boss of New York. In the Treasury was Samuel D. Ingham, of Pennsylvania, known as a good Calhoun leader in that State, but distinctly a provincial, distinctly not one of the higher strategists who had ruled the country for years. At the War Department was a shaggy denizen of the wilds, John H. Eaton, a Senator from Tennessee, and one of Lewis' stoutest henchmen in the campaign just closed. At the Navy Department was another Calhoun man, John Branch, of North Carolina. Here, perhaps, was a small sop to the Better Element, for Branch was what came to be known at a later date as a howling swell; he was rich, well educated, and moved in the highest social circles, but was far from being one of the heavy guns of the oligarchy. The Attorney-General

was John McPherson Berrien, of Georgia, another Calhoun man and a brilliant one, but hardly to be classed among the political nobility. Finally, Jackson appointed as Postmaster-General—although only some time later was that recognized as a Cabinet post—William T. Barry, of Kentucky, who had led the revolt against Clay in his own State and had carried Kentucky for Jackson. "It is the millennium of the minnows," said the Better Element, disgustedly preparing for the worst.

Nor were its expectations long disappointed, for it was soon apparent that democracy had taken over not the Presidency and the Cabinet, only, but the entire government. It is far from true to say that the Jackson adminisration made a clean sweep of all the officeholders in the country to make room for adherents of its own. The fact is that it took over only a part, and the smaller part, of all the offices; but it took more than any preceding administration had taken, and it took all the best ones.

Moreover, it took them with unexampled and inexcusable ruthlessness. Instance after instance is recorded in which the officeholder had no sort of notice of his dismissal, sometimes not even knowing it was contemplated until his successor showed up to go to work. It would be idle to attempt to palliate or excuse the brutality with which the proceedings were frequently

marked. It is a stain on the record of the administration and a reproach to Andrew Jackson's humanity.

But it is poppycock to contend that the procedure itself was morally indefensible, or even unprecedented. From John Adams down, every single President of the United States had rewarded with appointments to office men who were conspicuously responsible for his election. But with the other Presidents, this was a simple process, for every President elected under the reign of King Caucus was elected by a handful of influential men, most of them in Congress. These men invariably became Cabinet ministers, ambassadors or justices of the Supreme Court. Sometimes one of them already held an important post. Then he was continued in it, but everyone realized that his continuance was due to his support of the incoming President.

But the least important of the men who elected Presidents while King Caucus ruled would have been insulted by the offer of a postmastership. Why should a member of Congress aspire to appointment as chief of a bureau? Who can imagine the Governor of a State demanding appointment as a clerk in Washington? Therefore under the Caucus system the smaller jobholders were undisturbed by changes of administration because the men who had just claims to the President's consideration did not desire these small jobs.

Andrew Jackson, however, was elected, not by the

Caucus, but by a tremendous and far-flung organization built carefully from the ground up. Most of the great and powerful leaders were against him, but in every State in the Union scores of very small fry indeed had labored hard and faithfully at the organization of their counties, townships and precincts. Like a modern war, this campaign had been won less by the General Staff than by the second lieutenants. If it was right to reward a great man for faithful service by making him Secretary of State, why was it wrong to reward a little man for service as faithful by making him a clerk in the Postoffice Department?

The only new element in the situation was the fact that now, for the first time, a vast horde of little men had just claims to the President's consideration. They got it. Faithful performance of duty no more saved a clerk his clerkship than it saved Henry Clay the portfolio of State. The government service probably suffered on account of some of these changes; but the government service not infrequently suffers on account of Cabinet changes also, yet these are recognized as inevitable under the party system. And it should be noted that there are several instances in the Jackson administration where the record shows that the government service benefited by the change.

The possibilities of abuse of the system are so obvious and were so completely and frequently illustrated after

Jackson's day that the establishment of the Civil Service was rendered inevitable. But under the laws existing and the precedents established at the time, Jackson was only applying to the peculiar necessities of his own case the political morality of his predecessors.

They denied it hotly, and not insincerely, but every man of them came fairly within the range of Marcy's words, in that speech in which the Senator from New York inadvertently added a new term to the American political vocabulary:

> If they are defeated, they expect to retire from office; if they are successful, they claim, as a matter of right, the advantages of success. They see nothing wrong in the rule that to the victor belong the spoils of the enemy.

To Andrew Jackson, the man, however, the uproar over the Spoils System was a matter of little moment. Patronage to him, as to every other President, was mainly a source of endless vexation. But once he had decided that it was right to put his supporters in office, in they went, and all the howling of the opposition moved him not.

But there were other things that did move him. For one thing, he had made the astounding discovery that his enemy in the Cabinet in 1819, the man who had advocated his arrest and trial by court-martial after the Seminole Campaign, was not Crawford, whom he had

always blamed, but none other than the Vice-President, his friend John C. Calhoun! Major Lewis had known it a long time, but while the Jackson-Calhoun ticket was sweeping to victory that crafty politician would not for the world have done anything likely to cause a rift between the pair. When the election was won, however, and three Calhoun men had been appointed to the Cabinet, the situation altered. At the White House one evening, then, Major Lewis dropped a studiedly negligent remark in the hearing of the President. Jackson's attention was instantly aroused and he demanded more information, whereupon the whole business came out.

But there was no immediate explosion. On the contrary, Jackson proceeded carefully. He wrote to Crawford and got an exact account of the whole affair. Then he wrote to Calhoun seriously, but not violently, demanding an explanation. Calhoun denounced Crawford for revealing Cabinet secrets, and wrote a long and involved defense of his position, but had to admit the fact. And then Jackson summarily struck his name off the list of his friends.

In the meantime a genuine tempest in a teapot had been engaging the President's attention. This was the famous Peggy Eaton affair, the only quarrel over a woman on record as having disrupted a Cabinet and perhaps made a President.

Major Eaton, Secretary of War, just before entering the cabinet had married the daughter of one O'Neal, a tavern-keeper, and the widow of a naval purser who had committed suicide in a European port after a drunken spree. Margaret, or, as she was well and not particularly favorably known to Washington, Peggy O'Neal had two dangerous endowments for a girl in her situation, namely, beauty and wit. Naturally she was the target of spiteful gossip. Senator Eaton, a widower, boarded at O'Neal's when he was in Washington and gossip had connected his name with Peggy's even before the sailor's sudden exit. But when Washington realized that Peg had become the wife of a member of the Cabinet, there was a storm indeed.

It broke over Jackson before he had warmed his office chair. To the scandalmongers he paid no attention whatever, but fourteen days after his inauguration the matter was brought to his official notice in a way that he could not well ignore. A clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Ely, of Philadelphia, wrote him a letter of formal protest against countenancing such a woman as Mrs. Eaton, drawing up a formidable list of charges of the blackest character against her. As it happened, some of the charges had come to Jackson's ears before, and he had investigated them with the result that he was satisfied they were false. But he took the Rev. Dr. Ely's list and went over it, point by point, checking each suc-

cessive statement and probing it to the bottom. This investigation revealed not a scintilla of proof of anything the reverend gentleman had said. None the less Dr. Ely stuck to his opinion that Mrs. Eaton was a bad woman. Jackson then rechecked the stories, and finally demanded that Ely come to Washington and produce his informant, who proved to be another clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Campbell, minister of the church which Jackson and his wife had attended when they lived in Washington.

The reverend gentlemen had a bad time of it. In the presence of several witnesses the President produced their sheaf of charges, and then produced the records of his own investigations. One by one the charges were blown to bits. The origin of several of them was plainly shown to lie in the spite of malignant gossips, and all the evidence tended to prove that the rest originated in the same way. When Jackson was through there remained not a shred of proof that Peggy Eaton had ever once stepped from the straight and narrow way. He then demanded retraction and apology from the clergymen who, without evidence, had made monstrous charges against a woman.

But when it came to engaging in the pastime of blasting a woman's character, it appeared that the reverend gentlemen required no proof. They were not merely willing, they were determined to damn the woman on

gossip alone. They therefore flatly refused to retract anything.

Whereupon, for the first time since he had stood beside a new-made grave at the Hermitage, the blue fire that had shrivelled the mutinous soldiers blazed again from the old man's eyes, and his tongue became a stinging lash once more. On this occasion his respect for the cloth restrained him from exhibiting his power to manufacture incandescent profanity. But although each separate word was decorous he flayed the clerical scandalmongers in a style that made the spectators gasp and that left no doubt of the withering contempt in which he held the pair of them. The Rev. Dr. Ely and the Rev. Mr. Campbell sneaked out of the Presence, and have sneaked through history for a hundred years, with the marks of that awful scourging raw and red across their backs.

They did not know, or at least not until it was too late, that in attacking the character of a woman in Jackson's entourage they were tweaking Cyrano's nose. They could not guess what had passed through his mind during those sixty endless hours at the Hermitage when he stood by a bedside looking upon what he believed was largely the work of scandalmongers—looking and feeling his soul within him disintegrate at the sight. As he stood before them there was a miniature of Rachel next his heart. It was always there, for the rest of his life;

and with it there, could he do less than stand up for any woman assailed as Rachel had been assailed?

All the bitterness, all the pain, all the helpless, pent-up fury of those tragic days when calumny was blotting out the light of his own life lent speed and weight to his blows as he laid on the hapless pair of moral scavengers before him. And the scared, but fascinated, witnesses said among themselves that Andrew Jackson was himself again.

CHAPTER XXI

How President Jackson Was Whipped by the Great Ladies and Beat all the Great Men.

BUT of what use are auguries and omens, signs and portents, to men who are blind and deaf? Washington persisted in disbelieving the evidence of its own eyes. Washington was so accustomed to simulacra that when Jackson stood before it, it ignored the obvious man and sought for the secret, hidden man, who, in this instance, was not there.

The new President had lived for sixty-one years, much of the time in a blaze of publicity; yet not one of the men who were to be his most strenuous opponents knew him. They omitted, in all their calculations, one important element: when this man came to Washington he had nothing to hope for, and therefore nothing to fear. He was President of the United States; so no other office could tempt him. When he came to Washington it was well understood among party workers that he intended to serve only one term, therefore re-election did not interest him. And finally, in the campaign of 1828 and the tragedy that followed it, he had been down

into dark waters. After that fiery trial, pain meant nothing any more. Like Achilles he had been dipped in Styx and had come up invulnerable, as far as his personal life was concerned. The broadswords that played around him in Washington could only irritate, without really wounding him. Politically, mentally and in spirit he was a free man because the worst had already happened. Hope was dead, and, with it, fear.

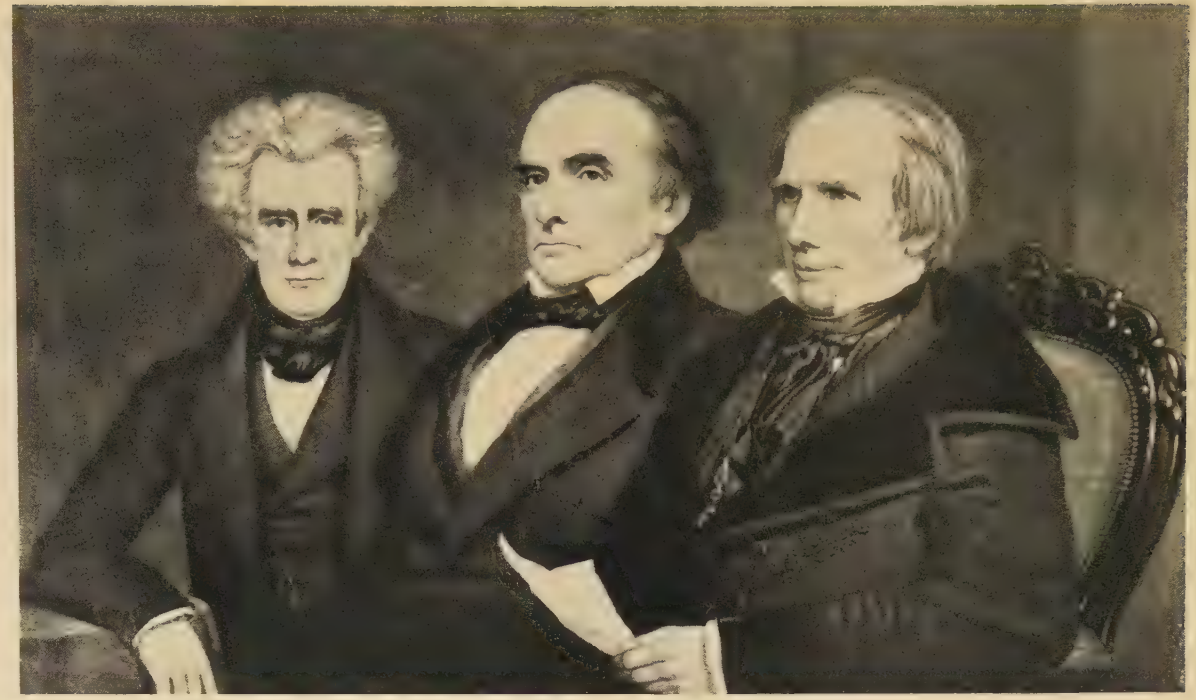
His strategy had ever been the strategy of the bull, namely, to lower his head and charge. Now that he had become invulnerable, it was perfect strategy. Therefore he was a man to persuade, to beguile, to inveigle, but not to oppose.

Some men saw this. It was perfectly appreciated, for instance, by Mr. Van Buren. But then Mr. Van Buren was a great man for appreciating the fine points in others. The quality had already brought him far along the road to political preferment. Mr. Van Buren was always good-humored, always smiling, always meaning no harm and hoping there would be no hard feelings. Although he had come up from the people he was a man of taste, of tact, of good presence. He was a man of letters, too, as his *Autobiography* proves. He was perhaps the earliest example in American politics of the Easy Boss; and the type was so new that people could not at first appreciate the obvious reason for its suc-

cess, namely, that nobody could hold real enmity for Mr. Van Buren (that is, in his early years) and therefore it was always possible for even his strongest opponent to arrange a deal with him. Ignoring this adequate explanation, those whom he defeated attributed to him an extraordinary degree of slyness and cunning. He was known as the Red Fox.

Major William B. Lewis understood Jackson, too. He had lived with him too long and was too astute a judge of men to make any mistake in that regard. So it was also with the young Kentucky editor, Amos Kendall, who had been appointed to a post in the Treasury Department. And so it was with the New Hampshire editor, Isaac Hill, who had also been appointed to office, but whose appointment was rejected by the Senate; whereupon he went back to New Hampshire and, with the tremendous prestige of the President behind him, was elected to the Senate, which was then compelled to receive him.

But it was not so with Henry Clay. It was not so with Daniel Webster. It was not so with John C. Calhoun. Especially was it not so with Mr. Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank of the United States. Mr. Biddle regarded Mr. Clay, Mr. Webster and Mr. Calhoun as very great men indeed; and so did Mr. Clay, Mr. Webster and Mr. Calhoun. None of them considered this woolly frontiersman, this wild soldier from



Jackson, Webster and Clay—"Very Great Men Indeed"

the backwoods, an opponent worth conciliating. None of them lacked confidence enough in his own strength to believe that in a final test he would not brush Jackson aside. So the quartet moved blithely on to destruction.

Biddle was the first to crash. President Jackson had come to Washington with no high opinion of the banking system which, as he had observed its workings in the West, seemed to him to be largely a cloak for fraud. But he did have a high opinion of the power of the banks, also formed from bitter experience. In the Bank of the United States, a private corporation to which the government lent its prestige as well as its money, he saw a menace of untold destructive possibilities. Jackson was a wretched economist, but he had plenty of wit to see that the Bank was rapidly becoming financially absolute in this country, and to realize that under a financial tyranny political liberty would do the people little good.

Yet a doubt remains that he came to Washington determined upon the destruction of the Bank. He was suspicious of it. He had a shrewd idea that the Bank thought itself stronger than the government and would not willingly be controlled by the government. But nothing more is certain, and there is a strong probability that if his suspicions had been dispelled he might have become the friend, rather than the enemy, of the insti-

tution. But nothing of the sort happened. Up in New Hampshire Isaac Hill desired to effect the removal of a minor official of the Bank. He failed in that, but he did succeed in getting an order on the Bank to transfer certain pension funds and the books relating to them to a Federal pension agent. Whereupon Mr. Biddle, having taken counsel with the Great Men, made the fatal mistake of refusing to obey the order.

So it was true—the Bank could, and would, defy the government of the United States! The bull lowered his head and charged. The Great Men swaggered to the rescue, but it was they who were brushed aside like pestiferous flies, and the unfortunate Biddle was caught squarely upon the horns and hurled into oblivion, and his Bank with him.

It was Mr. Clay's bright idea that precipitated the catastrophe. The Bank's charter did not expire until 1836, and Jackson expected to be out of office in 1832. But Mr. Clay believed that his retirement could be made certain, provided the Bank issue were pressed. If Jackson allows the Bank to be re-chartered, argued Clay, he will make himself look foolish in the West; if he opposes re-chartering, he will enrage all the financial interest of the country and it will sweep him out of power. Therefore Clay urged Biddle to apply for a new charter in 1832, when the Bank had friends enough in Congress to pass the bill. The application was made. The bill

was passed, and promptly vetoed. The country sustained the veto overwhelmingly.

This, however, runs ahead of the story. In 1829 it was not the Bank upon which President Jackson was expending most of his energies, but Washington society. The case of Mrs. Eaton was not settled by the scourging of the clergy. There still remained the ladies of Washington to deal with, and in attempting to deal with them Andrew Jackson took the whipping of his life.

The ladies of Washington, like the clergymen, required no proof to believe Peggy Eaton guilty. One is inclined to believe that they *knew* her guilty of the main charge against her, which was not adultery, but being a successful social climber. Peggy was a tavern-keeper's daughter, yet she had the impudence not only to be the wife of a Cabinet minister, but—and this, no doubt, was the head and front of her offending—to be pretty and witty and a huge success with the men, as well. Thumbs were down on Peggy. The old man in the White House might rage, and swear himself black in the face, but thumbs were down on Peggy.

She was coolly, blandly insulted in a thousand ways. She was grossly and blatantly insulted by the wife of the Dutch minister, and Jackson instantly made preparations to demand the man's recall, but the Red Fox managed to head that off. She was insulted by Mrs. Donelson, the President's niece and housekeeper and wife of his

secretary; and Mrs. Donelson and her husband were promptly sent packing to Tennessee. But it was all to no avail. Thumbs were down on Peggy, and appeals to members of the Cabinet to bring their families to order met but surly responses. But the Red Fox was a widower. He had no family to bring into line, no wife to whom he would have to make awkward explanations if he were attentive to the charming Mrs. Eaton. So the Red Fox rallied 'round manfully. He called on Mrs. Eaton. He danced with Mrs. Eaton. He gave dinners at which Mrs. Eaton occupied the place of honor. And the old man with the miniature over his heart warmed to the Red Fox. Martin was a good fellow. Martin was a gentleman. Matty had no streak of the hyena in him, no spiritual kinship with the dogs who had pursued another innocent woman. Matty would never be responsible for sixty hours such as those that had incinerated Andrew Jackson's soul. By the Eternal! Martin Van Buren was a man, and he should never lack a friend while Andrew Jackson breathed.

But the Red Fox saw that the situation was swiftly becoming impossible. He and Jackson had fallen into the habit of taking long rides about Washington together, and one day, after making several vain efforts to screw his courage to the sticking point, he came out with it. He must resign.

Jackson protested. He protested violently. He pro-

tested for more than twenty-four hours. But Van Buren pressed his point. It was idle, he insisted, to evade the facts. After all, he was the Red Fox. Everything that happened in the government was attributed to him. Witness the break with Calhoun—Van Buren had refused even to read the letters, much less had he offered advice, yet the country was convinced that he had instigated the quarrel. So with this Eaton business. So with everything. He was a drag on the administration, no matter what he did. Therefore he was resolved to get out. And then, if the Secretary of State resigned, the rest ought to follow suit and Jackson would have a chance to reconstitute the Cabinet without the Calhoun men.

It was shrewd argument, and in the end it won the President. Van Buren resigned. Eaton resigned. Branch, Ingham and Berrien were ordered to resign, and Ingham, whose wife had been particularly offensive to Peggy Eaton, left town before daylight lest the wrathful husband should fall upon him the instant he became a private citizen—which, apparently, the Major actually intended to do.

The ladies of Washington had won. Peggy Eaton was removed from the City's social circles. Later her husband was appointed minister to Spain and at Madrid, in the most austere court in Europe, Peggy Eaton won a huge success. But she was out of Washington.

Edward Livingston, then ambassador to France, was recalled and named Secretary of State. So there came to the social leadership of the Cabinet a woman at whom not even Washington could cavil, Cora Livingston, intelligent, charming, thorough woman of the world—and the woman who had been a friend to Rachel.

Louis McLane was recalled from London and made Secretary of the Treasury. Lewis Cass, the empire builder from Michigan, went to the War Department. Levi Woodbury took the Navy portfolio, and the Attorney-Generalship went to Roger B. Taney of Maryland. They were all good Jackson men, for the quarrel with Calhoun had exploded, and no intimate of Calhoun was thereafter tolerated in Jackson quarters.

The correspondence between Jackson and Calhoun had lately been publishd, but the country had seen the flash of naked steel between the two men earlier. This earlier conflict was not, in appearance, a clash of personalities, although the personal element figured largely in it.

It was April 13, 1830, that Calhoun had imitated the folly of Nicholas Biddle. Nullification had proceeded far enough to become an issue to be taken seriously by all politicians, and the nullificationists saw more than a possibility of capturing the party machinery. But while they ranked high in the organization, they still lacked the stamp of the President's approval. By no

hook or crook could they get the slightest encouragement out of him, so in an evil hour they decided to smoke him out, perhaps to trap him. They arranged a great dinner in Washington to celebrate the birthday of Thomas Jefferson. Naturally President Jackson could not refuse to be present at a dinner in honor of the memory of his political patron saint. He accepted, and Calhoun when he heard the news perhaps repeated the exclamation of the ecstatic Hebrew: "The Lord hath delivered him into mine hand!" The program committee immediately went to work and produced a program for the evening that was a marvel indeed. There were twenty-four toasts and practically every one of them was poisonously nullificationist. Some of them, indeed, were scarcely veiled expressions of hope for the early dissolution of the union. Let the newspapers come out with a list of the toasts and the information that the President had been in attendance, and he would be hopelessly committed to nullification.

But they reckoned without the cold courage of the man. He sat and glowered while one brilliant member of his party after another all but openly urged the destruction of the country for which Andrew Jackson had fought; but he said nothing, and when the twenty-fourth toast had been proposed he seemed to be committed indeed. But then, according to custom, volunteer toasts were in order, and naturally first place was reserved for

the President. Would he volunteer a toast? He would. He did. It was a single line:

"Our Federal Union: it must be preserved!"

The bull had charged and the great Mr. Calhoun had encountered a force that sent him rolling in the dust. Every man in the room realized that it was a declaration of war, and Bowers declares that they fled from the place as from a plague-spot. In five minutes hardly a third of the diners were left in the hall. The next morning the country realized it, too. Hence when the controversy about the Cabinet's action after the Seminole campaign broke into print, the politically wise were prepared for it.

But they were not prepared for the dissolution of the Cabinet, and when the news burst upon them they put the most diverse interpretations upon it. Henry Clay, for instance, was delighted. It seemed to him that the administration had blown up from within. Daniel Webster inclined to the same view, and even Nicholas Biddle took heart of hope. They held the curious notion that the Red Fox was an engineer hoist by his own petard. They credited Van Buren with having instigated the quarrel between Jackson and Calhoun and believed that he was now appalled by the success of his own handiwork and was seeking a place of safety to escape the vengeance that he saw was soon to be visited on the administration. So sure were they of their own

ability to dispose of this wild Tennessean that they were unable to believe that Van Buren was not so sure of it as they were. They seemed to have been incapable of imagining that the move might be simply a reorganization of the administration forces, designed to enable it to put up a more effective fight.

But so it was. Major Lewis was already at work, arranging his lines for the campaign. Since Duff Green, of the *Telegraph*, was irrevocably committed to Calhoun, it was necessary to establish an administration organ in the capital. It was not long then until the *Globe* appeared, and to edit it Amos Kendall and Lewis brought to Washington the Kentucky editor who had fought for Jackson at Kendall's side in 1828, Francis P. Blair. This completed the organization of the famous Kitchen Cabinet, composed of William B. Lewis, Isaac Hill, Amos Kendall and Francis P. Blair.

This quartet is worth more than passing notice, for it perfected a new political technique which remains standard American political practice to this day. This technique was far from being altogether admirable, but it had one advantage which no amount of moralistic opposition could counter-balance—it worked. The Great Men of the day, such as Messrs. Clay, Webster, Calhoun and Biddle had only contempt for it; but every time they came into collision with it they were neatly and promptly unhorsed.

None of the Kitchen Cabinet was a statesman, but each was a superb politician. Each grasped the essential fact of the new situation, namely, that the effective political appeal was no longer to the classes, but to the masses; and each knew how to appeal to the masses. Jackson thus possessed a Cabinet of immense respectability and with three members—Livingston, Cass and Taney—of first-rate intellectual attainments; and behind this he had an unofficial Cabinet constituting a political general staff which for sheer competence has perhaps never been excelled in the history of the country.

All thought of retiring from office at the end of the first term had now been abandoned. Nullification and the Bank had each been smitten, but each was far from dead; and his advisers were easily able to persuade the President that his duty to the country required that he remain in office until he had finished the work he had begun.

So the administration, by 1831, was already deploying for the new campaign. And strange to say, few there were in the country who had much inkling of its strength. The new politics was still too new to be well understood. Faith in the survival of the old system was not yet quite dead. But after a century's experience the veriest tyro today can appreciate the immense strength of Jackson's position. Leaving out of consideration altogether the solid foundation of his power, namely, his

personal appeal to the popular imagination, he had in conspicuous offices a group of eminent gentlemen who, the country was sure, would stoop to nothing unbecoming gentlemen; and behind the scenes he had a group of politicians who would stick at nothing that promised political advantage. He had the men to put up a front, and he had the men to do the dirty work. How could a candidate be more splendidly equipped?

However, one characteristic of the Kitchen Cabinet must be emphasized here. They were politically sinuous to the last degree. They were out for victory, and had few scruples about how it was won. If they did not invent, at least they introduced into national politics and brought to an amazing point of perfection pretty nearly every artifice that the demagogue has practiced with success since. They were, in the modern phrase, politically crooked almost beyond imagination. Yet, although several of them held offices of trust, there is not the slightest indication that any member of the Kitchen Cabinet ever defrauded the government they served out of one cent. Politically unscrupulous, they nevertheless measured up to a standard of personal integrity that the government would be fortunate indeed to find among all its servants.

Why, then, did they work so hard? What did they get out of it? Isaac Hill, as a Senator, held the most conspicuous office in the Kitchen Cabinet. Blair, being

given a great deal of government printing, made some money, although he never became a very rich man. Kendall eventually became postmaster-general, but Lewis never held any office of importance under Jackson. The reward in every case is insufficient to explain the man's loyalty. In part, and in large part, the impulse must have been temperamental. The very fact that all these men played the game of politics superbly is evidence that they loved to play it. But it was not by chance that four men temperamentally so diverse were fitted into a single, smooth-running political machine. There is no obvious means whereby to account for the attraction between the amiable, rather easy-going Kendall, the hard and bitter Hill, the hard-working, matter-of-fact Lewis, and Blair of the florescent imagination and colorful style. It is obvious that one piece is missing out of the puzzle. That piece was Andrew Jackson.

He inspired in these men something beyond admiration. They served him, not for the place, nor altogether for power and the excitement of the game, but in part, at least, out of affection. Long years after the game was over, after the passions and excitement had subsided, after Andrew Jackson was dead, and all the actors in the great drama had vanished from the stage, Parton asked one of the four, Francis P. Blair, what was his considered judgment of Andrew Jackson, and Blair burst into a eulogy that made Parton gasp. Furthermore, when he

finished his voice was faltering and tears stood in his eyes. And this was twenty years after.

The secret of the fanatical loyalty of the Kitchen Cabinet—and, no doubt, part of the secret of their extraordinary success—was simply that they loved the man.

Mildly, as he did all things, the Red Fox loved him, too. Martin Van Buren always insisted that he thought, when he resigned the Secretaryship of State, that he was resigning his best chance to become President of the United States. His enemies snorted, but he may have been telling the unvarnished truth. After all, the Secretarial Succession was still more or less of a tradition, even though Jackson had declared, on assuming office, that he would support no member of his Cabinet as his successor. At any rate, the Secretary of State was in much better position to work for his own political advancement than was the minister to England; and Jackson insisted that Van Buren should go to London if he must quit the Cabinet. So he was given a Presidential appointment and sailed.

Whereupon the Senate thought it saw another chance to deal a shrewd blow at the administration. When it reassembled, late in the year, it confirmed the new Cabinet appointees, but it rejected the nomination of Mr. Van Buren. Senator Benton, of Missouri, now became the administration floor leader, exhausted every parliamentary resource; he raved and raged; he threatened

and cajoled and implored; but all in vain. The Senate had a chance for a shot at the Red Fox and it proposed to get him. The nomination was rejected.

Benton dropped back into his seat when the vote was announced and said grimly to Senator Moore who sat near him:

"You have broken a minister, and elected a Vice-President!"

So the Red Fox came back from London to add his formidable political skill to that of the Kitchen Cabinet, already strengthened by the presence of another shrewd politician in Attorney-General Taney. The administration moved into the campaign in excellent order. Its organization was compact and smooth-running. Its *morale* was of the highest. Its fighting men were alert, confident, eager for the fray. It faced strong and determined opponents, indeed, but it was in ideal condition for a tremendous fight.

But what of Andrew Jackson himself? He, too, was ready for the fight, as he was always ready for a fight. But it was stern determination with him, rather than eager anticipation of the joy of combat. He had set his hand to the plow, and he would not look back. What indeed, was there for him to look back to? What to look forward to? He might destroy his enemies and thereby render some service to the union. But for himself, it amounted to nothing. He was still a sick man,

and he knew now that he would always be a sick man. The Presidency was but an affliction, yet the Hermitage was henceforth destined to be a hermitage indeed, only the shell of the home of happier days.

As the President and Van Buren rode near Washington one day Jackson's horse stumbled and only the quick assistance of Van Buren saved him from a bad fall. Jackson said that his companion had probably saved his life; and when Van Buren protested, he added bitterly that perhaps, after all, saving such a life was not a favor.

There he stood upon what men regard as the summit of human achievement, and he had no wish to live.

CHAPTER XXII

How Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun Joined Mr. Biddle in the Dust-Bin.

BY 1831 not only was King Caucus dead, but it was no longer good form in political circles even to mention him. So swiftly had public sentiment changed that every politician worthy of the name realized that the very word "Caucus" had become a handicap, and whatever method of choosing a candidate might be employed, it must not bear any taint of the Caucus. Major Lewis then proposed a great convention of the friends of General Jackson to nominate a Vice President; and Isaac Hill and Amos Kendall thought well of the suggestion. So, indeed, did the opposition—so well, that they held a convention of their own before Lewis' could be called. In December, 1831, eleven months prior to the election, a gathering of men calling themselves National Republicans, a name presently abandoned for that of Whigs, met in Baltimore and nominated Henry Clay for President and John Sergeant for Vice President. The Convention issued an Address to the Country, precursor of

the modern platform, declaring that the Bank was the issue of the day.

The friends of Jackson, the regular Republicans, soon and since known as Democrats, also met in Baltimore, but not until May, 1832. Their candidate for President was for all practical purposes already nominated, so they wasted little time on that, but quickly proceeded to select a man for the second office. Van Buren received an overwhelming majority of the votes and so became the organization candidate for Vice President. The convention adjourned without issuing an Address. Andrew Jackson was its platform. The country could read him better than it could read a book.

So the shot at the Red Fox had turned out as Benton predicted. In the Senate, when someone had expressed doubt that the rejection of Van Buren's appointment was politic, Calhoun made a prophecy. He said:

"It will kill him, sir, kill him dead. He will never kick, sir, never kick."

The brain under that mop of iron gray hair made many wild political guesses, but not even John C. Calhoun ever made a worse political prophecy than that.

So the parties went to the country with the issues defined remarkably well for an American campaign. One ticket meant Clay and Sergeant and the Bank; the other, Jackson and Van Buren, no Bank and no Nullification. Again it was the classes against the masses. The

Bank issue appealed to wealth for obvious reasons, and the theoretical argument in its defense in the very nature of the case was somewhat complex and unintelligible except to men with the intellectual power of grasping abstractions. The same thing was even more conspicuously true of Nullification. Dark Calhoun with his strong and agile intelligence was, indeed, able to construct an argument in support of Nullification that was logically unassailable. But even a constitutional lawyer had to follow him with close attention to appreciate the strength of his position. True, Clay and Sergeant did not advocate Nullification, and they did advocate a protective tariff, the policy against which Nullification was a protest. But the country understood perfectly who was the mortal enemy of Nullification. It was not Henry Clay who had stood up at a Nullification banquet and thundered:

"Our Federal Union: it must be preserved!"

Therefore every Jackson argument against Nullification had the effect of an argument against Clay. And the Jacksonian argument had the invaluable merit of simplicity. It was simply this: constitutional or unconstitutional, legal or illegal, Nullification means dissolution of the union. No mental athlete was needed to understand that. Like unto it was the argument against the Bank. It was this: the Bank has the government's money and the government's protection, and it defies the

government. Who say you shall run this country, the government or the Bank?

Other things being equal, when two men appeal to a democracy, one with a simple, the other with a subtle, argument the man with the simple argument is bound to win. It is true that two and two make four. It is equally true that the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides. But one hundred per cent of the people understand the former proposition, while probably not twenty per cent understand the latter. Let them be advocated by two public speakers and four times as many people will know that the first man speaks truth as are convinced that the second man also is truthful.

From the beginning Clay and Sergeant never had a chance, but when the returns were in, the massacre was more complete than the most sanguine Jacksonian had hoped. Clay carried six out of twenty-four States. Jackson carried sixteen. Vermont voted for the Anti-Mason candidate, and South Carolina deliberately threw her vote away on a man from Virginia who was not even running elsewhere. Jackson's electoral vote was 219 out of a total of 288. Clay got 49.

But if even Nicholas Biddle could see that the Bank was doomed, Nullification had received only a sidelong blow. After all, Calhoun, not Clay, was its great pro-

tagonist, and it was Clay, not Calhoun, who had been blotted out.

So the Nullificationists proceeded to the only course that could have added strength to the enormously strong position of the administration—they, too, defied the government and so played squarely into Andrew Jackson's hands. November 19, 1832, the famous Ordinance of Secession was adopted by a convention composed of nearly all the leaders of the State of South Carolina. Parton's summary of the Ordinance follows:

> I. That the tariff law of 1828, and the amendment to the same of 1832, were "null, void and no law, nor binding upon this State, its officers or citizens."
>
> II. No duties enjoined by that law or its amendment shall be paid, or permitted to be paid, in the State of South Carolina after the first day of February, 1833.
>
> III. In no case involving the validity of the expected nullifying act of the legislature shall an appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States be permitted. Any attempt to appeal to the Supreme Court "may be dealt with as for a contempt of the court" from which the appeal is taken.
>
> IV. Every officeholder in the State . . . shall take an oath to obey this Ordinance.
>
> V. If the government of the United States shall attempt to enforce the tariff laws . . . "the people of this State will thenceforth hold themselves absolved from all further obligation to maintain or preserve their political connection with the people of the other States and shall

> organize a separate government, and do all other acts and things which sovereign and independent States may of right do."

The legislature of South Carolina met and promptly passed the laws envisaged in the Ordinance, and Andrew Jackson faced once more the old problem of mutiny.

But this was indeed an old problem, one that he had long since mastered. He might be weak in economics and his views regarding the tariff and fiscal policies might be more or less uncertain and obscure, but he knew what to do with mutiny.

His first acts were unperceived by the public. They were to send the Chief of Staff of the army, General Winfield Scott, flying to South Carolina to study the terrain privately, and to issue orders to the War and Navy Departments to mobilize every armed man and warship in the service of the United States and hold them where they would be instantly available in an emergency. These dispositions made, he stepped out before the country, set the bugle to his lips, and sounded "Assembly."

His medium was a Proclamation addressed to the people of South Carolina. It stands today the unmistakable masterpiece of all Jackson's state papers. Edward Livingston worked it over, gave it form and polish, but Edward Livingston no more wrote it than Chapman wrote the Iliad. It was Jackson, through and through,

Jackson defending his country and therefore Jackson at his highest and best. Nor was it merely such broadside of vituperation as had blasted the militiamen in Alabama. On the contrary, it was a careful, closely reasoned and lucid argument against Nullification. It brushed aside all the fine-spun theories of the constitutional lawyers and rested the case on the common-sense ground that the United States and Nullification could not exist together; and it made plain the resolve of the Federal government to maintain its authority at any cost. Yet it was anything but a threatening document. It was throughout an appeal to reason. Its temper is well exemplified in the fine passage which has rung in the ears of history ever since.

"Fellow citizens of my native State!"—wrong, perhaps, since he was probably born in North Carolina, but how effective!—"let me not only admonish you as the first magistrate of our common country not to incur the penalty of its laws, but use the influence that a father would over his children whom he saw rushing to certain ruin. In that paternal language, with that paternal feeling, let me tell you, my countrymen, that you are deluded by men who are either deceived themselves or wish to deceive you."

He painted a picture of America as the soldier, statesman and patriot conceived it, the asylum of the oppressed, the defender of liberty, the protector of the

arts and sciences, the glory of the past and the promise of the future, and then added:

"Look on this picture of happiness and honor, and say, *we, too, are citizens of America.* Carolina is one of those proud States, her arms have defended, her best blood has cemented this happy Union! And then add, if you can without horror and remorse, this happy Union we will dissolve—this picture of peace and prosperity we will deface—this free intercourse we will interrupt —these fertile fields we will deluge with blood—the protection of that glorious flag we renounce—the very name of Americans we discard."

Demos, like old Charlemagne, had been plodding along a little confused by a multitude of counsellors; but when this martial music struck his ear he knew there was fighting in Roncesveaux. The blood leaped in his veins again as it had leaped in 1815 when, down below New Orleans, General Andrew Jackson had loosed the cannonade.

Except in a small group close to Calhoun, opposition to the administration vanished overnight. Daniel Webster himself became for the moment a Jackson man. Old John Quincy Adams was constrained to support the President who had applied a "blister plaster" to Nullification. John Marshall, reading the Proclamation, suddenly revised his opinion that the country was inevitably gone to the dogs. Justice Story marveled at Jackson

enunciating sound principles and could not believe that he would stand to his words. None of these men abated anything of his personal animosity against Jackson; but each realized that in this instance the President was fighting for the country, and each was patriotic enough, in such circumstances, to sink his personal preferences and support the President.

All, that is, but Henry Clay. Mr. Clay played safe. The Proclamation, he said, contained some good things but some others "are too ultra for me." After all, the fanatical States' Rights men had votes, which Mr. Clay could use conveniently in the next election. Mr. Clay knew that he had been tossed by the bull, but he had not yet realized that politically his back was broken, and that never again was he to come within rifle-shot of the Presidency. He still dreamed that he, the champion of protection, might consolidate behind him the strength of the anti-protection South—provided he did not outrage the South by giving too ardent support to the Proclamation.

Then, to do him justice, it must be admitted that Henry Clay was constitutionally incapable of approving whole-heartedly anything as forthright, definite and uncompromising as the Nullification Proclamation. After all, while the document was filled with entreaties, it unquestionably burnt every bridge behind the administration. It staked everything. It left no possibility of

retreat. And Henry Clay never approved of a policy of that sort. He believed sincerely that all political advancement is the fruit of compromise. If that involved compromise with sedition, nay, with high treason —"levying war upon the United States"—he would not stick at it. He believed that a compromise could be effected with anything. He believed that a negotiator sufficiently skillful could make a workable arrangement between the most antipathetic elements.

Venomous old John Randolph may have been wrong as regards the particular incident under discussion, but as regards the general principle he was right when he said in 1824 that Henry Clay was capable of effecting a combination of Blifil and Black George, a coalition hitherto unheard-of of the Puritan and the blackleg. The blistering truth in the observation was what made it sting so that Clay shot at Randolph for saying it.

However, Mr. Clay's disaffection amounted to little, as affecting the country's opinion of Andrew Jackson. At last he had reached the top. At last wealth, learning and respectability were behind him, as well as the common people. He was at the crest of his career. He had attained a point of popularity but rarely reached by any man, perhaps never attained by another President.

But he had neither time nor inclination for personal enjoyment of his popularity, for the leadership of South Carolina had not been won by the Proclamation. On

the contrary, the Governor of that State replied with a counter-proclamation as studiedly insolent as the South Carolina genius for insolence could make it. The gods had decreed the destruction of South Carolina, and already she was more than half mad. The monumental arrogance that thirty years later was to precipitate the holocaust had already eaten away a good part of the reason of South Carolina political leaders. To the argument and entreaty of the Proclamation they replied with a snarl and a show of teeth.

And the man at whom they chose to snarl was Andrew Jackson!

Then came what was perhaps the supreme test of his iron will as well as his basic common sense. He did not put himself in the wrong by hurling the armed strength of the United States upon the rebellious State. On the contrary, he moved with the greatest circumspection. He remembered that, after all, South Carolina had not yet done any overt act. She had, indeed, decreed Nullification, but a decree was only talk. There was, there could be, no nullification in fact until the moment when some South Carolina official should interfere with an officer of the United States in the discharge of his duty. Until such interference occurred, Andrew Jackson would not act. But he could prepare for action, and he did. Quietly the troops assembled, regiment after regiment gathering at points where they

would be instantly available. Quietly the navy collected its forces, massing the fleet within striking distance of Charleston harbor. Quietly the forts occupied by United States forces in South Carolina were cleared for action, the batteries put in perfect order, the magazines filled, thousands of small arms brought in, and the commanders solemnly warned that they must be defended to the last gasp.

In the midst of the preparations Congress assembled. John C. Calhoun had been elected to the Senate and had resigned the Vice Presidency, and the whole country waited tensely for his arrival in Washington. He started from his South Carolina home the day after Christmas and Jenkins has described his journey in a felicitous phrase—"like that of Luther to attend the Diet of Worms." Everywhere he encountered personal courtesy but, as regards his politics, averted faces. Men admired his courage, for many believed that he was marching to death. Who was John C. Calhoun to face the terrible old man at Washington?

The public admiration of his courage was justified, for there is no doubt that he was thrusting his head into a noose when he finally entered the Senate, and in the presence of thronged galleries solemnly took the oath to support the Constitution of the United States. The restraint of Jackson was marvelous, but it had its limits. As firmly as he believed in his own existence, he believed

that John C. Calhoun was principally responsible for the whole Nullification program. He believed that John C. Calhoun, to satisfy his own ambition and to satiate his own spleen, had deluded the people of South Carolina into this madness. He regarded Calhoun as a man who, for his own benefit, would not hesitate to plunge his country into civil war, nay, who would not hesitate to destroy that government for which the Revolution had been fought, for which Andrew Jackson had staggered under the British officer's sabre, and rotted in the Camden prison camp, and dragged himself through the Creek wilderness when every step was torture, and fought at Horseshoe Bend and Mobile and Pensacola and New Orleans. That Calhoun might prosper, should the Union be destroyed? Not while Andrew Jackson had rope and a hangman ready to execute his orders!

Still, he throttled his passion and moved softly and circumspectly. The overt act had not yet been committed. No officer of the United States had been hindered in the discharge of his duty, therefore no nullification existed yet. The first of February was the critical date. A loyal and reliable man, Joel Poinsett, was in South Carolina for the President, watching like a hawk; at the first treasonable move he would instantly dispatch word to Washington; and Jackson had made preparations, on the arrival of that message, promptly to seize every South Carolina leader, Calhoun in chief, and

turn them over to be tried on charges of high treason. In his soul he had sworn to ring the Capitol with gallows and hang every man of them as high as Haman.

A bill was introduced in Congress conferring on the President extraordinary powers, and for once the administration did not have to rely on Senator Benton as its main defender. The duty was assumed for the occasion by no less a personage than Daniel Webster, who made the great speech in reply to Calhoun. The bill passed.

But the first of February had passed earlier and no overt act had been committed. Just before the fatal date a convention of nullifiers, hastily assembled in South Carolina, resolved that as measures were then pending in Congress which might redress the grievances of South Carolina, no steps in support of Nullification should be taken pending the outcome of the debates.

Had Calhoun's courage failed him? It is hardly fair to put it that way. Certainly urgent messages had gone to South Carolina pleading for time, and had their effect in the convention's resolutions. But even if Calhoun called off action, it does not follow that his courage had failed. It is more likely that once in Washington he realized that to proceed would be sheer suicide, and suicide is foolhardiness, not courage.

For the third time a Great Man had swaggered in front of the bull and the bull had lowered his head and

charged. Now John C. Calhoun was a wreck, as Nicholas Biddle was a wreck, and Henry Clay was a wreck. Of the quartet Daniel Webster alone survived.

In the summer of 1833 the President made a journey into the North and Philadelphia, New York and Boston successively went mad. Harvard University conferred upon the man who never could spell "yield" the degree of *Legum Doctor*, presented with an address in Latin, thereby moving John Quincy Adams to scandalized reflections upon the degradation of his *Alma Mater*.

Also at Boston a hemorrhage from the lungs—they were growing increasingly frequent—put an end to the tour. Andrew Jackson, LL.D., seventh President of the United States, exterminator of Nullification, idol of the country, turned back to Washington to resume the endless battle, old, weary, sick, lonely and sad.

"Sam, you have been true to your country," he said to bachelor Sam Dale, "but you have made one mistake in life. You are now old and solitary without a bosom friend or family to comfort you. God called mine away. But all I have achieved—fame, power, everything—would I exchange if she could be restored to me for a moment."

CHAPTER XXIII

How the Administration Closed in Triumph and Senator Benton Was Able to Gloat.

NULLIFICATION was dead, but the battle roared on. The country had given the administration a clear mandate against the Bank in 1832, but even so its friends were not without hope. After all, the charter did not expire until 1836 and many things may happen in politics in four years.

The Bank, after all, was intensely respectable and tremendously powerful even in its present crippled condition. It could muster strong support in both houses of Congress and it could compel the support of business interests. Even as resolute a fighter as William B. Lewis was a little afraid of it and Vice-President Van Buren was decidedly afraid of it. Probably each had respect enough for the money power to feel that an attack on it was a little disreputable. Certainly Louis McLane felt it so strongly that as Secretary of the Treasury he was of no value in a fight on the Bank; so when Edward Livingston was sent to France in the hope of straightening out the spoliations claims imbroglio, McLane was

put in the Department of State, and William J. Duane was made Secretary of the Treasury, where he proved more of a Bank man than McLane had been. Lewis Cass had no stomach for an offensive directed against the Bank, either. He favored letting it die by expiration of the charter.

But none of these opinions mattered in the least. Andrew Jackson was still in command, and Andrew Jackson had determined that the war should be carried into the enemy's country. His fixed idea was that the Bank could, and would, use the government funds in its possession to break down the strength of the government. He frankly expressed his belief that if the funds were left in the Bank, Biddle would buy up enough members of Congress by 1836 to over-ride the Presidential veto —a cynicism not quite so staggering as it sounds since, considering the Bank's existing strength in Congress, the purchase of only a small number of additional votes would have been necessary. Therefore the President determined that the deposits should be removed.

In the Cabinet Taney and Barry approved, but everyone else opposed the idea. Duane, in particular, the new Secretary of the Treasury, flatly refused to issue any such order. Duane was Jackson's personal appointee. He had known and admired the elder Duane, editor of the *Aurora* of Philadelphia, and had offered the portfolio to the son largely out of friendship for the father.

"Andrew Jackson in Command"

But after he got to Washington Duane seems to have conceived the idea that he was a divinely appointed Secretary of the Treasury and owed nothing to Andrew Jackson. So when Jackson spoke of removal of the deposits he refused point-blank. Jackson spoke to Lewis about it, and Lewis suggested that Duane be given another post, to which Jackson assented, instructing Lewis to offer him a foreign mission. But, no! Secretary Duane was perfectly satisfied to remain Secretary of the Treasury, and would have nothing else. Finally, then, Jackson asked him to resign, and Duane went to the incredible length of refusing to do that! So he was summarily dismissed, whereupon he wrote and published an account of his tenure of office, thereby erecting an imperishable monument to his own egotism.

The day Duane was dismissed Taney was appointed Secretary of the Treasury, and three days later he signed an order instructing all government fiscal agents thenceforth to discontinue depositing government funds in the Bank of the United States and to place them in other depositaries named in the order.

With that the incident was closed, so far as Andrew Jackson was concerned, but the fury of the Bank's friends in Congress was to make the welkin ring for months to come. When the Senate met again a resolution of censure was introduced by Senator Clay in a speech into which he compressed all the bitterness

against Andrew Jackson which his successive defeats had distilled within him. The resolution was supported by Senator Calhoun in a speech more vituperative, if possible, than Clay's. Clay referred to a "spirit of defiance to the constitution and to all law." Calhoun referred to "Pilferers under the silence of midnight." Finally Webster came into action, not indeed with the personal venom of the other two, but nevertheless supporting the resolution of censure. It was debated incessantly for three solid months, and then adopted by a vote of twenty-six to twenty.

Immediately Senator Thomas Hart Benton moved to expunge the resolution from the record.

Three weeks later the President sent to the Senate a formal Protest against its action in censuring him and denying its right to do anything of the kind. The Senate promptly adopted resolutions branding the Protest as "a breach of the privileges of the Senate," stating that the President had no right to protest against any action of the Senate, and ordering that the document be not entered on the journal—absurd, in view of the fact that the Senate had invited the Protest.

Senator Benton again moved to expunge the resolution of censure, but his motion was lost.

All this, of course did not assist the Bank in the least, but it served as a fine opportunity for Jackson's enemies to abuse him to their heart's content. The Bank, in the

meantime, was taking its own measures. It had sharply restricted its loans and discounts, bringing pressure to bear on the commercial community, thereby precipitating upon Congress a flood of petitions for relief. These were presented by Messrs. Clay, Webster and Calhoun with great show and ceremony; but they had no more effect than Senator Benton's constantly renewed motion to expunge.

It is a temptation to go in detail into some of this battling in Congress. It was unquestionably one of the most brilliant periods, intellectually, that the Capitol has ever known. In the fierce fires of that time the political weapons still in use in this country were forged, and the foundation of the existing party system was laid. But these incidents really constitute another story. They form part of the public record of Andrew Jackson, but they affected but slightly his personal life. They enraged him, they exasperated him, but they did not alter him.

In the meantime, Edward Livingston in Paris was encountering peculiar difficulties. The claims which he was pressing had not only been acknowledged by the French, but a treaty providing for their payment had actually been ratified. Still the money did not come, and the King, Louis Philippe, privately advised Livingston that it would never be voted by the Chamber of Deputies until the firmness of the United States was known.

Livingston transferred this information to the President shortly after Congress had ended its session after seven months of wrangling which had not advanced the cause of the Bank an inch. Livingston suggested that the next message should contain a paragraph on the subject of the French claims. It did, but what a paragraph! Jackson unquestionably considered it a model of mild remonstrance, since its language was most temperate; but it closed with the suggestion that when a debtor defaulted on a just debt the creditor's natural and proper recourse was to seize the property of the debtor. Under the procedure governing international relations at the time it was all but a declaration of war.

Congress, indeed, was hardly so much exercised over the paragraph as over the fact that Senator Benton had once more moved to expunge the vote of censure from the records of the Senate; but Paris went wild. The French ambassador was ordered home and Mr. Livingston was offered his passports; but with the interruption of diplomatic intercourse the thing hung fire for the time being.

More interesting things were happening at home. The President had naturally withheld the nomination of Mr. Taney as Secretary of the Treasury as long as he could; but in the last week of the previous session he had sent it in, to have it promptly rejected. So Mr. Taney was out. But a year and a half later an Asso-

ciate Justice of the Supreme Court died. Mr. Taney had always aspired to a seat on that bench and the President promptly named him. The Senate did not even act on the nomination. Before the next session, however, Chief Justice Marshall died. Moreover, there had been elections and the complexion of the Senate had changed. So when Roger B. Taney was named Chief Justice of the United States he was promptly confirmed, and took his place in plenty of time to render the Dred Scott decision.

In 1834 Benton took his resolution to expunge to the country, and demanded the defeat of Senators who had voted against it; and from that time on the powerful organization commanded by Major Lewis lost no opportunity either to defeat opposing Senators or to induce legislatures to pass resolutions calling on them to vote to expunge.

Likewise the fiscal policy of Andrew Jackson was approaching its fantastic climax. The public debt of the United States, amounting to forty-eight million dollars when he assumed office, had been paid, and a surplus piled up in the treasury. The famous Specie Circular had gone forth, ordering that purchase of public lands be paid for, not in bank notes, but in gold and silver, or their equivalent, with a frightful effect upon the land booms. Benton's fanatical delight in the "hard money" policy, his incessant and vociferous championing of the

gold standard, now won for him his historical sobriquet of Old Bullion.

The surplus, however, troubled the President. He had the wit to see in it a potential menace, but he lacked the training in economics which might have led him to a sensible solution of the difficulty. On the contrary, he moved now into one of the few mistakes of his career which later he himself admitted. He advocated the distribution of the surplus among the States as "loans" which bore no interest and have not been repaid to this day.

However, the battle was wearing to an end. The year 1836 arrived. Congress met and Senator Benton made his inevitable motion to expunge. Then the country was electrified to hear that France had chosen to consider herself offended by the President's message, had sent home our *Chargé d'Affaires*, and had demanded a public apology of the President of the United States. The President's message asked for support to enforce our just claims.

Once more Andrew Jackson was destined to rally his country behind him. The response to his appeal was tremendous, and in the midst of it shone old John Quincy Adams, who had returned to the House of Representatives. Once more it was a question of supporting Jackson and the country or opposing both, and the old patriot never hesitated. On the floor of the House he made a

speech not commending but commanding every man who dared call himself an American to stand to the President as against the arrogance and injustice of a European power. The House took flame from the old man's spirit, and the order of business was completely lost in the roar of enthusiasm that greeted his conclusion.

But, as a matter of fact, the storm was already over. Great Britain had offered to act as a mediator and the offer was accepted. Under British negotiation the business was settled so speedily that on May 10, 1836, the President was able to announce to Congress that the sums due had been paid to the agent of the United States.

It was in the blaze of glory attending the French affair that the administration swung into the campaign of 1836. Martin Van Buren had long ago been designated as the administration candidate, and the usual Baltimore convention was no more than a ratification meeting. Nor had the opposition built up a political machine in any wise comparable to the one engineered by Major Lewis. Harrison, the Whig candidate, received seventy-three electoral votes to one hundred and seventy for Van Buren, South Carolina again throwing away her vote on a candidate not named elsewhere.

More than that, both the Senate and the House were captured by the administration and held by safe majorities. Therefore upon the 16th of March, 1837, Senator

Thomas Hart Benton, of Missouri, moved to expunge; and this time he had the votes!

Mr. Clay was there, Bowers says, dressed all in black "as if in mourning for the constitution." Mr. Calhoun was there, all cold poison. Mr. Webster was there, preternaturally solemn, speaking in hollow tones that might be expected to come from the tomb. It was a great show, in which all the Great Men denounced the wild, ignorant military chieftain in unmeasured terms; and then were crushed under the unemotional steam roller. Twenty-five to nineteen, the Senate voted to expunge. So the clerk brought the record and drew broad black lines around the offending sentence, writing across its face,

"Expunged by order of the Senate, this 16th day of March, 1837."

So the reign of Andrew Jackson ended with one man supremely happy, namely, he who had once been Young Tom and who was now Old Bullion, but who, young or old, remained a true man, a liegeman, a man on whom to rely.

CHAPTER XXIV

How It Ended.

IN the afternoon of March 5, 1837, the Ex-President walked from the White House, where he had remained as the guest of the new President, over to the home of his friend Blair. Presently Benton came in and with him Senator William Allen, of Ohio. They talked of the event of the preceding day when, under skies unusually brilliant for an Inauguration Day, Martin Van Buren had taken the oath while the old man who had made him President sat, feeble and bowed, and listened to the ceremony and then to the Inaugural Address. At last it was over, and Andrew Jackson, private citizen, started to descend the steps of the Capitol to his carriage. As he stepped out in view of the throng around the building a great shout went up. No such thunderous tribute had ever been accorded the incoming President and Jackson, astonished and deeply moved, could only acknowledge it by mute signs. So he passed down the steps and off the stage of national affairs in a deafening roar.

This afternoon at Blair's they talked of all he had

accomplished. No enemy had withstood him. Nothing he had set his heart upon had he failed to gain. The Bank was destroyed. Nullification was broken. The party was in full control of the government. Van Buren was President. And then Jackson confessed that two things he had left undone—he had had no opportunity to shoot Henry Clay or to hang John C. Calhoun.

It has been the fashion for a hundred years to regard this as the final, and perhaps the greatest, violent extravagance of a violent and extravagant man. Violent it unquestionably was; but before it is branded as utterly extravagant one thing should be taken into consideration, namely, that in 1861 it was the firm belief of a large part, if not the greater part, of Southern leadership that the United States would not fight. If Clay and Calhoun had died violently in 1833 at the hands of a President of the United States, and if the people had tolerated that violence, the South would at least have escaped the mistake of believing that the North would not fight. As it was, Clay had introduced a compromise tariff bill that was a sop to the Nullifiers; and later he was to punctuate his career with compromise after compromise which did, indeed, stave off immediate conflict but which also confirmed Southern radicals in their contemptuous belief that the North had no stomach for a fight.

Perhaps not even Jackson could have put the two

Great Men to death without precipitating a revolution, but certainly none of his successors could have done it. They lived, at any rate, and with all their cleverness they were not clever enough statesmen to cure the cancer in the body politic. Half a million men had to die by violence before it was eliminated. If Jackson could have cut it out in its incipiency by killing two, no matter how great, that would have been violent, indeed, but would it have been extravagant?

The aura of the fantastic that hangs about Jackson's career as a statesman is largely due to the fact that he was far-sighted in the pathological sense. He could see his objective clearly, but he was incapable of seeing how to get to it. Hence his strategy of the bull—he simply lowered his head and charged. In the matter of the Bank he perceived the mischief that was bound to result from a coalition between the government and Big Business. He knew that sooner or later Big Business would be the dominant partner and the government would be taking its orders. But his only suggestion of a remedy lay in destroying the Bank. In one of his messages he did, indeed, outline something approximating the Sub-Treasury system but he did not press it upon Congress. So with the surplus, which he eliminated by virtually throwing it away—mistakenly, as he himself admitted in his last Message. Therefore his suggestion of death for Clay and Calhoun may be dismissed as a

bad remedy, but his foreboding that between them they were leading the country to the verge of an abyss was only too dismally justified by the event.

President Van Buren urged his predecessor to remain at the White House until May or June, when the journey back to Tennessee would be less rigorous. But a long, hard journey was nothing to Andrew Jackson, even at seventy. March 6th he started back home.

The journey was made slowly, with many long halts, for if the spirit was untamed, the flesh was weak indeed; and the very eagerness of the country to do him honor was exhausting. But at length he arrived and was tremendously welcomed by Nashville.

He reached the Hermitage with ninety dollars in money, with Rachel's picture and her Bible, and with little besides. He had had to sell his cotton crop to clear up outstanding debts in Washington. Although his farm was clear of encumbrances, he had nothing else, for the Presidency had cost him all his savings. So he settled down once more to the life of a farmer and so spent the rest of his days. In his later years he was somewhat embarrassed financially by the losses of his adopted son, and he died relatively a poor man.

The Hermitage was, of course, perpetually thronged with visitors. To some extent Jackson suffered in purse as Jefferson had done, but he was a better farmer than

Jefferson and so escaped being eaten out of house and home by swarms of uninvited guests. To the end he maintained his lively interest in politics, and the country was occasionally startled by fiery letters written from the Hermitage, but it is hardly to be believed that he profoundly affected the course of events. Jackson's strength was not in his influence with the politicians. He had no talent for intrigue, and unless he had an army, either of soldiers or of voters, at his back the inner circle was little inclined to listen to him.

So the years slipped away, rather mournfully. The Hermitage itself was not the house which had held its master's happiness, for it had been gutted by fire in 1836, and this was a reconstruction of the old place. Friends were around, but not the old friends. The children of those days were now fathers and mothers themselves. There was adulation in plenty, but adulation cannot replace friendship. The old comrades-in-arms, the bronzed men who had swung along the wilderness road with him, down to the *chevaux-de-frise* at Horseshoe Bend, who with him had heard the thunder of the fight at Fort Bowyer rolling across Mobile Bay, who had manned his earthworks at New Orleans, had most of them gone on a longer march to face an ever victorious foe.

The pioneer country had gone, too. Nashville was a thriving, highly civilized city. The frontier had

moved on somewhere beyond the Mississippi and the pioneers, men and women, were a type known no more to Tennessee. The ladies, God bless 'em, were with us yet, but where were the women, the strong women of his youth who could handle ax and rifle, the gallant women who faced death without dismay, the blithe women who lived and laughed and sang in the midst of peril? Gone, and the lovely, exquisite creatures who were supplanting them for, all their charm, lacked something—lacked magnificence.

Above all, the greatest heart and the finest spirit Andrew Jackson had ever known were gone. Grass-grown now was the mound that had been raw, new clay when the President-elect felt the very earth crumbling under his feet and John Coffee's steady arm was the only stable thing in a ruined universe; but the scar that day had left upon his soul had never healed.

For Andrew Jackson was your true romanticist. To admit it is the only way to make him intelligible. His Quixotic imagination incessantly created giants out of windmills—espionage out of poor old Arbuthnot's warning to Billy Bowlegs, a taste for murder, arson and ravishment out of the happy-go-lucky British troopers' toast to "Beauty and Booty," studied insolence out of the Spanish Governor's incurable indolence, bribery and corruption out of the Clay-Adams political deal, an octopus out of Nick Biddle's bank, and all the spawn of Hell

itself out of Calhoun's seditious arrogance. What, then, could he not create out of a woman he loved?

Rudel created the Lady of Tripoli out of a vague rumor. If the romantic imagination is capable of a feat such as that, why set bounds to what Andrew Jackson may have made of a lady whom, not by rumor but by the acid test of thirty-five years of every-day life, he knew to be gentle and kind and true?

At any rate, he carried her miniature always next his heart and many men—Benton, Donelson and Lewis for instance—who bore to the White House during those thunderous days messages that would admit of not an instant's delay entered suddenly into the President's bedchamber to find the old man sitting with a worn Bible on his knees and staring at the miniature. It must have been his nightly custom, at least when the battle grew desperate and he was driven hard, to turn to Rachel for a moment's peace before he slept. He was ruler of a great nation, idolized by the people and treated with respect by kings; but the two things that he valued much in the world were a miniature and a Bible.

Now at the Hermitage he waited for death, clinging only to the book and the picture. But death played with him cruelly. For eight years he waited while disease advanced steadily, but slowly, one is tempted to say mincingly. Pain was never absent for a day, and for the last two years hardly for an hour. One lung was entirely

consumed, and hemorrhages grew more frequent, more serious, more exhausting.

He had made, in the phrase then current, his peace with God. That is to say, he had joined the Presbyterian church to which Rachel had belonged, although he had never been an unbeliever in the sense of denying the authenticity and authority of the Christian faith.

Six months before the end dropsy set in and the ordeal became frightful. The man was almost beyond semblance of anything human, merely a bloated mass of agony. But pain was an old story to him and he was Andrew Jackson still. When this had been going on for four and a half months, his doctor one day asked him what he would have done with Calhoun and the other nullifiers if they had kept on, and from the helpless wreck came instantly the reply:

"Hung them, sir, as high as Haman. They should have been a terror to traitors to all time, and posterity would have pronounced it the best act of my life."

No, history has never selected a pair of shoulders better able to bear a burden, just or unjust. Six weeks later, June 8, 1845, he was dead, but until the last flame flickered out he was himself, magnificently consistent to the end.

Consistent after the end, indeed, for they fought at his obsequies. When the New York Historical Society undertook to pass resolutions of respect, there was a vio-

lent altercation, punctuated with laughter, hisses and applause. The resolutions were adopted, but three members registered votes of protest.

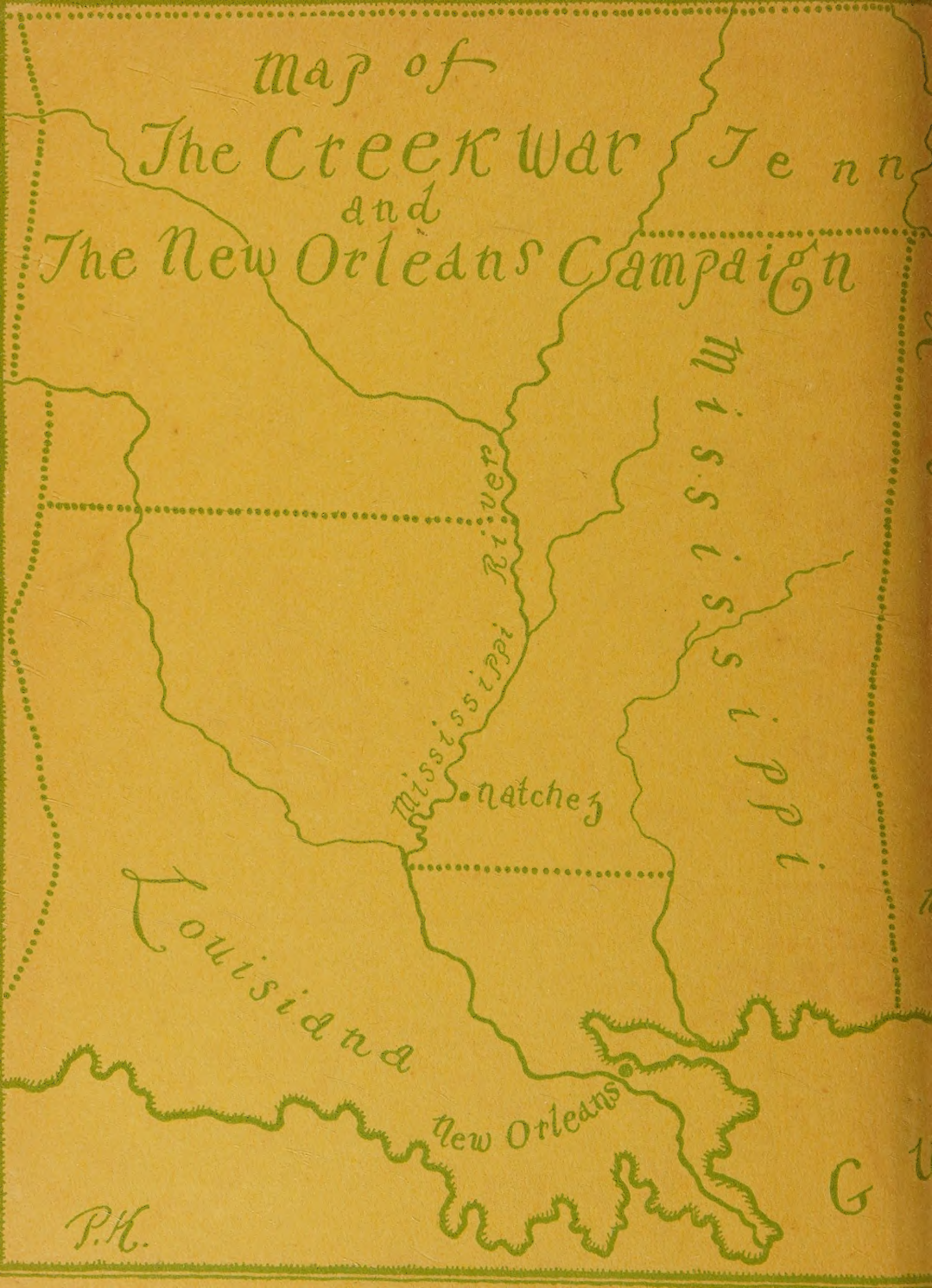
In the Hermitage grounds they laid him beside Rachel. So the story ends.

* * *

"Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher . . .
"What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"

The wilderness which had slain his father yielded to Andrew Jackson. The war which destroyed his mother and his brother, he survived. The wild frontier to which they dispatched him on a dangerous mission, he subdued. The enemies that rose against him he struck down. He swept the red man beyond the great river. He swept the British into the sea. The country thundered his acclaim and poured honors upon him. It gave him the Presidency, and he made the Presidency such a power as it never had been before. The immigrant linen draper's son touched the height of human glory and his renown echoed throughout the world.

But surely the bitter Preacher never had a finer illustration of his text.


Map of
The Creek War
and
The New Orleans Campaign
Tenn
Mississippi River
Mississippi
Natchez
Louisiana
New Orleans
P.H.